Forward

An opening thought...I hope all who read the accounts of Dad's journey across Europe during World War II enjoy it as much as I did. To have sat down with Dad for about 10 hours, in the Fall of 2005 to go over each detail was enlightening to me. These stories reveal so much of who he is and who he was.

God bless each and every one of you and I pray that none of you or your family ever has to endure what he did. Thank you for your interest.

Penny Misel Paoliello

After being drafted, probably the first part of October 1942, (after I became twenty, because at that time you had to be twenty to be drafted), I took a physical for classification. Draftees for World War II were considered the Army of the United States whereas the regular Army before World War II was the United States Army. A few months after I was drafted, they started drafting at eighteen years old. But anyway, Ruth and I got married October 25, 1942. Then on November 10, I went to Akron for examination and induction in the Army.

In Akron I stayed overnight at the Portage Hotel. Although I didn't know it, I had high blood pressure. The doctor wanted to know if I'd been drinking the night before and celebrating. I said, "Yeah." I was stupid for telling him that. I'd never had a drink in my life, before or after. But he said, "Okay, I'm going to pass you then." So, I got in the Army.

The next day, November 11, 1942, was Armistice Day. At eleven o'clock they swore us in. We were staying in the Portage Hotel and down the street you could see people marching. It was an Armistice Day Parade (World War I). Then I went back home.

I had a furlough until the 25th of November then I had to report to the train station. They took us, probably fifty of us, to Fort Hayes in Columbus, Ohio, which was the day before Thanksgiving 1942. We got our Army uniforms and such. The next night we were shipped out to Camp Atterbury in Indiana. Of course, it was the middle of the night when we got there. Camp Atterbury, Indiana, is about thirty miles west of Indianapolis. When we got off the train, they fed us because we hadn't had any supper. On the train they gave us stale Fig Newtons. They were just powdery. But when we got off the train, they fed us fried eggs. I thought, "Boy, this is good eatin' in the Army, buddy. Fresh fried eggs." That was about the only time you had fresh fried eggs in the Army. After that it was always powdered eggs.

From there we took basic training. We were behind the rest of the Company. We went in as the First Battalion, 329th Infantry Regiment, D Company. They called us the 4th Platoon. Course, there wasn't such a thing, but we didn't know that. There were about twenty-five of us that came in late; therefore, the rest of the Company already had most of the basic training. They already had had four weeks of training, so we were behind them.

Colonel Crabill was the Regimental Commander and I had him up until the end of the war. He was a full Colonel. The Battalion Commander was Major Minter. I hadn't been there more than a couple weeks and the Colonel came in the door of the barracks. We were in there having a class. When an officer entered the room you were supposed to, whoever saw him, call attention. I happened to be facing the door. I saw it was a Colonel; he had an eagle on his shoulder. He walked up to me and I called attention. He said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "Yes sir, Colonel Crabill." He was just all smiles. He was happy that I knew who he was. But I really didn't know who he was but said Colonel Crabill because that was the only Colonel I'd ever heard of!

One other time a little later, Kenny Maier (Kenny, Art Tucker, Dick Greer, Bill Jirles, and I were all from Cambridge Ohio and were in the same Company), anyway, one day Kenny had laryngitis. A Lieutenant came in the barracks and Kenny was standing there looking at him. I called attention. The Lieutenant jumped all over Kenny because he didn't call attention. I said, "Sir, he has laryngitis." The Lieutenant said, "Well, why didn't he tell me?" I thought, "You stupid idiot!" I didn't tell him that, but I thought it.

Christmas Day 1942, Ruth, Martha Maier, Art Tucker's wife (I can't think of her first name), anyway, they came out to see us for Christmas. We got a pass for the day then came back to camp and then we got a pass for weekend pass. That Christmas might have been on a Friday. Saturday, we got a weekend pass. But anyway, we were at the bus station Christmas Day waiting on the women to come in on the bus from Cambridge. They were on the train part of the way, I guess. Anyway, while we were standing there at the bus station, here came an Army car painted green with a star on it. It was a Packard Clipper. Art, Kenny, and I are standing there. I'm thinking, "Boy, who in the world in the Army has a Packard?" And it went on by. We were standing there just talking. Pretty soon here comes a Staff Sergeant. He said, "I've got to have you fellows' names." I said, "Well, why?" He said, "You didn't salute the General." We said, "Yeah, we did it after he went by." We heard someone say, "You did not." I turned around, here was Major General Melbourne. In fact, he'd been in North Africa. He'd been in combat. He came back and was the Division Commander, Major General. Anyway, he told the Sergeant to go ahead and tear up our names. So, we went to town. That was in 1942-Christmas.

About February, Ruth came out and stayed in Franklin, Indiana. I'd get in there usually twice a week. I'd be there Saturday afternoon and Sunday and then maybe on a Wednesday night I'd go in on a pass. She stayed there until about June or July 1943. I went to maneuvers in Tennessee just outside of Nashville around Murphysboro, Cooksville, Tennessee and Ruth went back to Cambridge. At that time, I was a Machine Gunner.

After Tennessee maneuvers I got a fifteen-day furlough and went home. Then I reported back to Breckenridge, Kentucky, which was about thirty miles south of Evansville, Indiana. I took my car back. I had a '39 Mercury. Ruth got her license while I was home on furlough. So, she could then drive. When she came back, she stayed in Morganfield, KY.

While at Breckenridge during inspection one day Captain Squires wanted to know if I'd been on a KP. I told him yes. He said, "Well, next time you tell them to let you off early to shave." I'd been on KP maybe six months or so before, but I didn't know he meant that day. My beard was dark at that time. I'd shaved but it was still dark. Anyway, I didn't get in trouble that time.

Then one day shortly after we were in Kentucky, I got into an argument with a Sergeant from the Second Platoon about one of the guys in our Platoon. Because

there weren't enough beds upstairs, one of our guys was downstairs with the Second Platoon. Anyway, I got in an argument with this guy, a Sergeant, and he wanted to fight. I was going to fight him, so I went out the front door. I didn't know it, but he went out the back door and over to the orderly room and reported me. The next day I found out I was restricted. It was Friday night and I always got a Saturday pass, but I wouldn't be able to get a pass since I was restricted. So, I went over to the orderly room for inspection. The First Sergeant, I don't know why, but he liked me. Anyway, he told me, "If you just go up to the Battalion Headquarters and just go up there and just take a little while; just dust off the desk up there, you come back then I'll give you a pass, weekend pass." So, while I'm up there dusting off the desks, I had on a field jacket as it was chilly. I dusted all the desks at the Battalion Headquarters. While doing the dusting I noticed this big book of passes. With our outfit, every time you went off Base you had to go to the orderly room and get an officer to sign a pass. We didn't have a Class A pass like some places did. Every time you went out you had to go get a pass. So, there was a book of passes lying there. It was about probably oh, I don't know, a couple inches wide and about three inches long. It was probably about an inch thick. That was a whole bunch of them. Well, I just scooted them off the desk into my jacket pocket while I was dusting. From then on Kenny Maier and I--I took Kenny with me--we went to town every night. Even when we were out in the field, we'd come in on a water truck, go to the barracks and change our clothes then take a bus in to Morganfield, which was about a mile away. The next morning, about four o'clock in the morning, Ruth would bring us back to the barracks where we'd change into our field clothes. She'd then take us out in the country about a quarter of a mile from where we were camping. We'd then walk to our tents. So, while all the guys were out in the winter weather in tents freezing, we were in town nice and warm. We had those passes for about nine months or so. Boy, on some of those days and nights the roads were icy, but Ruth was a young kid then, so I guess it didn't bother her.

While at Camp Breckenridge KY in the fall of 1943 I was on the firing range. A friend of mine and I were in a trench working the targets. The targets were about eight feet square. We would pull them up and down on a cable. They had circles on them and a black dot in the middle. The firing line was about 500 feet from the targets. There were about eight targets. We had an officer in charge of us. We would check the targets after they were fired on and plug the target then hold up a disk on a pole to mark where the target was hit. If it was missed, we waved a red flag. The Range Officer had a phone and he called me and told me a Colonel was going to fire on our target and that he was an excellent shot. He wasn't from our outfit. He was hitting the center every time. We decided to wave the red flag, so he thought he missed the target. We did this several times. Finally, he told the Range Officer to watch the target. Boy, we thought we were in trouble. The Colonel fired again, and the Range Officer checked the target. Evidently, the Colonel was so frustrated he actually missed the target! We didn't get caught.

Thanksgiving of 1943 they told us to have our wives that were in town to come out and have Thanksgiving supper with us. At the time we were out in the field. And while we were out there, I got in a discussion with some guys about bore sighting our gun. They said you could take the back off of our machine gun and look down

through the barrel at your target, about say eighteen hundred yards away or whatever, and if you bore sighted you'd hit the target. They called it bore sighting, using the bore of the rifle or machine gun barrel to looked down the barrel. I was a Machine Gunner at the time. I said, "No, that won't do it. You gotta raise that gun." The first thing I knew the Battalion Officers were arguing about it. They kept saying when the bullet came out of the gun it was going to twirl and that would make the bullet go up. I said, "Nope. The instant that bullet comes out of that gun theoretically it starts dropping. That's why you've got a sight on there." Some of them believed me and some of them thought, "No, you could bore sight." You couldn't! It was funny to me that a couple guys talking about it and the first thing you know a Lieutenant got a hold of it, then it got on up to the Battalion and it just kept on going. I didn't know it was starting a war.

It was seven o'clock before we got back to the barracks that night. The kitchen had put the meal out on the table at like five o'clock. Everything was cold. They had turkey and the trimmings. You could hold the gravy boats upside down and the gravy just hung in there. It wouldn't come out. Ruth and Kenny's wife, Martha were there as was Helen Jirles. Bill and Helen had gotten married while we were at Camp Atterbury. Anyway, that was Thanksgiving 1943.

As a side note, Martha and Ruth were on the outs. Ruth was pregnant and Martha wanted to smoke in the car. They got in an argument about it, so they fell out. Kenny and I were still friends.

While I was at Breckenridge, I found out that the Company Executive Officer wanted gasoline stamps. My dad was in the lumber business, so he had what they called R stamps. That was for stationary engines. Dad had plenty of them. I kept like four, I think, four and five gallon cans of gasoline in the trunk of the car so when I'd go home on furlough I had enough to get home because gas stations were closed at night. Anyway, Lieutenant Wolke found out that I had ration stamps. I don't know how but some way he found it out. The word got to me that he was wanting some stamps. He wanted to buy some stamps. Saturday morning when we had inspection, I was upstairs in the barracks. The stairway was about a bunk or two bunks from me. For inspection, the Platoon Sergeant and the Lieutenant would go around and check everybody. They'd inspect your footlocker, so everything had to be out there. For inspection you stood at attention at your bunk. When Lieutenant Wolke was finished with inspection, let's see, I was only about ten feet away from him over by the stairs. He called me over and said he wanted to talk to me. I can still see the look on the face of the Platoon Sergeant. It looked like he was thinking," boy, he is in trouble." But I knew what he wanted so I went over to him. He said, "I understand you have gasoline ration stamps." I said, "Yeah." He said he was from Boys Town, Nebraska and his girlfriend was going to come and get him as he was going on leave. She had enough gasoline stamps to get to Kentucky but didn't have enough stamps to get back to Nebraska. He wanted to know if I would sell him some stamps. I said, "No." I tell you; his face fell. Then I said, "But you know I'd like to go home. I'd like to have a furlough. I'd like to have a seven-day furlough." He said, "Alright, you've got it." I was just standing there just looking

across the aisle at Kenny facing me. I said, “Well, Maier there, he’s from the same town I am. I’d like to have a furlough for him, too.” He said, “Alright, you got it.” I said, “Okay, how many stamps do you want, and I’ll give them to you.” He was all grins. He was happy. He said, “You go and get your furloughs.” I said, “Kenny, you got a furlough, a seven-day furlough.” Kenny couldn’t believe it. The sad part was he couldn’t go home with us because Martha and Ruth weren’t speaking. I hated it. But anyway, we had the furlough. From then on everybody treated me differently in the Company. I must have been pretty cocky, but I got away with it. It worked.

Another side note, I was promoted to Private First Class after about four weeks in the service. It was a nice sunny day; I remember when I got it. All five of us from Cambridge got PFCs. A lot of the guys never did make it. My base salary as a Private First Class was fifty-four dollars a month. But I think twenty-eight dollars had come out of that. Ruth got fifty dollars a month of which part of it was mine. I actually drew nine dollars a month. You had to pay for the clothing and washing your laundry. Then I had to take a War Bond. I paid $2.50 a pay into a $25 War Savings Bond. I never did get a bond or my money back. Later it wasn’t mandatory that you buy the bonds, but you never got back what you paid into it. I paid into it for probably eight months, but I never got it back. After I went overseas when Cash was born, then Ruth got like ninety dollars a month. When I went into combat, I sent everything home. I didn’t get any pay.

We went overseas from Kentucky in March of 1944, and went to Camp Shanks, New York. We were there for a few days. It was the end of March or the first of April, probably the first of April when we went onboard ship to ship overseas. We got onboard at night. They had a band playing there. I think it took thirteen days to cross the Atlantic. I believe, it was the eighteenth of April 1944 when we landed in Liverpool, England. It wasn’t a bad boat. We had hammocks we slept on. I didn’t get really sick, but I didn’t feel very good. The ship was British, the H.M.S. Samaria.

When we got there, we were standing up at the rail getting ready to unload. It was towards dark but not quite dark. They said Patton and Eisenhower were standing down at the dock when we got off. We then went by train to Wales that night. We then set up tents, squad tents. Probably about eight or ten people to a tent. Not a pup tent but a square tent, preamble tent, just outside of Wrexham, Wales. Wrexham is where Elihu Yale, the prime benefactor and namesake of Yale University, was buried. I went and looked at his grave. And in fact, I wrote to an old schoolteacher of mine, Melba Trott, and told her. I couldn’t tell her where I was. Told her that I went and visited his grave and thought maybe, since she was a teacher, she might know where Elihu Yale was buried. Our letters were censored but whoever was checking them probably didn’t know who Elihu Yale was. It amazed me he was buried in just a plain cemetery and I was able to visit his tombstone.

I don’t know what side of town we were on, but I think, Wrexham was just outside of Cambridge because Kenny and I would go into Cambridge on a Sunday pass. I would get tea and a roll, crumpets they call them. But anyway, we stayed there a good little while.

We then went up in the mountains, Mount Snowden, and took maneuvers. In fact, there was a stone that formed like a little waterfall that was there during the Norman Conquest in 1066. It had a plaque on it, a brass plaque. It was like a little dam. Been there since 1066. Training there was said to have been a decoy to make the Germans think that we were going to invade in a hilly region in France rather than the beaches.

On the morning of June 6th, we marched out. We then got word the Invasion had started. They got us ready and moved us out. We, the 83rd Division, went to Plymouth, England. There were probably 15,000 men in our Division, but the actual combat troops were a much smaller number. I was a Machine Gunner. I had a thirty-caliber machine gun, water-cooled. It had a jacket around it attached to a hose that was attached to a steam-condensing can. I was Number One Gunner when I went into combat.

We had to wait at Plymouth until the weather broke. On the 18th of June we boarded ship to go across the English Channel. We were in a small boat. We didn't have a mess hall or anything; we just had garbage cans with hot water in them. We ate K rations or 10 and 1 rations, which we cooked in the hot water. 10 and 1 rations were C rations and you had to heat them. When we were fighting, we only had K rations.

We were just supposed to be on the Channel for about twenty-four miles, a day's time or less. We got caught in a storm so we couldn't land. We finally landed, I think, about the 21st of June 1944. We lost track of dates. But around the 21st or 22nd we landed on Omaha Beach. We were part of the Invasion. Eisenhower's biography or an autobiography, whichever it is, tells about when the 83rd landed; they were sick, tired, and seasick. And we were.

We climbed off on a net. We could climb down off of the boat onto a landing craft. It drew up close to the shore and then just let the front end, a ramp, down. We then walked up a trail up a hill, a cliff, actually, above Omaha Beach. When people look at the movies, they can't believe how anyone went up through there.

But anyway, we went up to a little orchard. We had on gas impregnated clothing, oily or waxy like, over our dress clothing, ODs. That was hot so we took those off.

We went from there that night moving closer to Carentan. On page 191 of the Time Life book, Liberation World War II, there's a picture of the 101st Airborne Division and we relieved them. It shows the streets we went down. A picture in the Time Life book, The Second Front World War II, shows the machine guns on carts, which were silly because we couldn't use them. And they probably didn't use them either. Well, we did use them maybe for one day, then we found out you couldn't get them through the hedgerows.

But then we sat in Carentan, in a defensive position more or less. We were being shelled but none of the Germans were attacking. We weren't either. We were just

waiting for the build up to start the Assault. And the Fourth of July 1944, well, on the third we moved up closer to the line to what some people called the Front. We called it online. The area reminded me of back where I was raised on the farm down in the bottoms in Cambridge, OH. But anyway, that's when we found out that the carts with the machine guns weren't any good.

Then on July 4th we attacked, and we got nowhere. The first thing we found out was we were in the middle of a minefield. So, we backtracked and got out of that minefield. We stayed in a ditch overnight along the highway. On the fifth we attacked up along a paved highway just about like a road going down from Pleasant City to Cumberland OH. We went a short distance on the highway then went off to the right into the hedgerows. Going up there I had the machine gun on my shoulder and ducked down to go under a tree limb. When I looked back up, here shrapnel had cut the tree limb off. A few minutes later I saw a man get killed. That was the first of our own men I saw get killed. There laid, I didn't know at the time, Roy Whiteman, who I knew in the States. I didn't recognize him. He didn't have a mark on him but evidently the concussion of the blast got him as he went over a hedgerow. A hedgerow was like a dirt bank, actually. They could be anywhere from maybe five feet, six feet high. They varied. But they were actually what they used for fences back in the olden days, centuries ago. Big trees were growing on them and thorn bushes. They would have a gate in between fields. The Germans had these gates zeroed in on because they knew we had to go through them. We couldn't get a tank anywhere except through these gates and the Germans would knock them out as they went through. Finally, someone got smart and put sharp prongs on the front of the tanks then they could push their way through the hedgerows. Hedgerows were the way the whole countryside in Normandy was laid out. We'd be on one side of a hedgerow and the Germans on the other side. They couldn't see us, and we couldn't see them, but they knew when they left, we would occupy their former position so they would shell us with artillery. They would zero in on us. At this point I was Number One Machine Gunner.

That night we stopped near a farmhouse along this highway and slept in the barnyard. We'd advanced for maybe a couple hundred yards or so. Then the next morning, the sixth of July, we went down a sunken road. And this actually had been used for centuries and trees just grew over top of it and it had a hedgerow on both sides of it. You couldn't hardly see anywhere due to the brush. It was just to the right of the farmhouse. On the left side of the road we slept overnight facing the Germans. Everyone was on guard, but we took turns sleeping. The next morning, I went up to the farmhouse and filled my canteen with water from their well.

Then I don't know what happened, I don't remember them getting hit but they did. All the non-commissioned officers, except Gilbert E. Lentz and Dick Greer, were gone. Platoon Sergeants, Section Leaders and the Squad Leaders were gone. They were all casualties, some killed and some wounded. About everybody got some minor wounds. But we're just talking about people who had to be evacuated. Almost all of us got a Purple Heart back in the hedgerows. About everybody got hit some. I got hit on the arm but nothing serious.

Lentz was my Section Leader, Sergeant Lentz. He was a Staff Sergeant. In the States we weren't really good friends but overseas in combat we got to be buddies. Nobody was really that close to Lentz, maybe not even me, I don't know, but I was as close as anybody. Gilbert E, I always called him. He called me Cash and I called him Gilbert E. Anyway, at that point, I took charge since there wasn't anyone else to be in charge. Somebody had to take over, so I took charge of what we had left.

Photo, Staff Sergeant Lentz, me, Cpl Eddie Jones and Sergeant Stuart Stauffer

The Squad Leaders had binoculars. I don't remember how I got them, but I got binoculars at this point. I was using them, and a Rifle Company Lieutenant came up to me. We were all lined up in this sunken road facing the Germans. He told me not to use binoculars as Captain Shelton had just got killed. He was using binoculars and the light reflected and the Germans had fired on him hitting him right between the eyes. So, I didn't use them anymore.

Then we started getting hit from the rear. I don't know who this Major was, but he was standing up on the hedgerow and took a white handkerchief out and waved it. And here it was the 4th, our own 4th Division firing on us from behind. They thought that we were Germans and we thought they were the Germans. The 4th Division was wearing fatigue clothes. We were wearing ODs (olive drabs); therefore, we didn't recognize each other's uniforms. We finally found out who it was.

Then about that time we started getting fired on from the left from the farmhouse where we had slept the night in the barnyard. The Germans had got behind the farmhouse. They got in behind there and were shooting at us. I had us down on the sunken road with the machine guns. Lieutenant Adams and Sergeant Lentz grabbed me and said, "Come on." So, we ran up this sunken road probably a hundred yards or so up towards where the shooting was coming from. We were going to get killed anyway so we ran up there and got behind the shoulder of the paved road. It was built up a little higher than the field. We went off to our left for about hundred feet. Then we ran across the road and got behind the Germans.

That's when I started firing. Lentz fed the belt to the machine gun. I fired laying the machine gun across my arm and against my chest, not from the hip. There wasn't such a thing. I had a field jacket on, which protected my arm. Even though it was water cooled, the machine gun would get hot after a while of firing. So, I fired the gun and Lentz stood there beside me feeding me ammunition because in the hedgerows we didn't use tripods. We did use them once we broke out of the hedgerows. We found out real quick they weren't any good in the hedgerows. But anyway, we broke it up. We got out of it all right. It ended up that Lentz and I got Bronze Star medals and Lieutenant Adams got a Silver Star. But we didn't do anything great. We were going to get killed anyway so we broke it up.

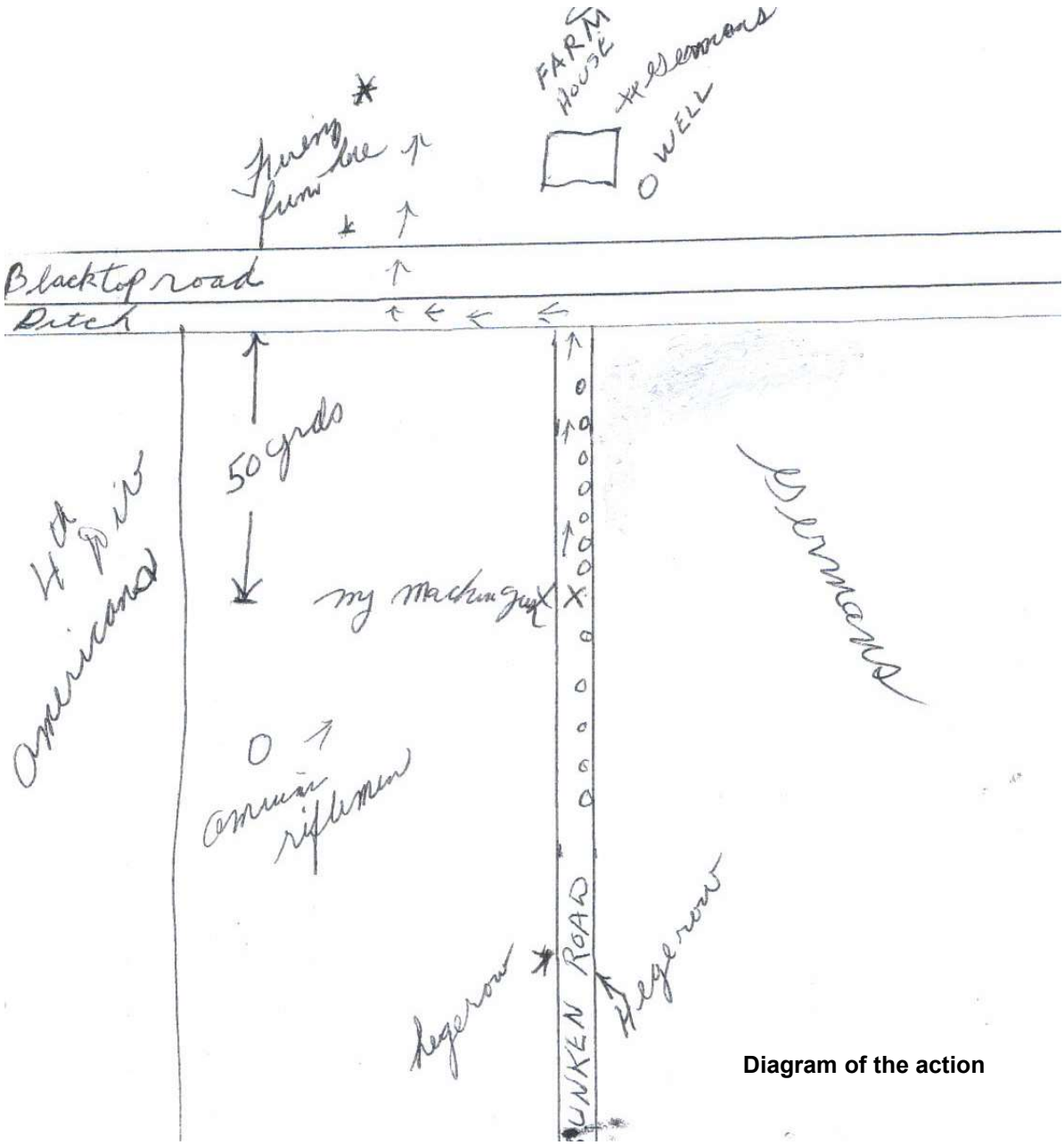
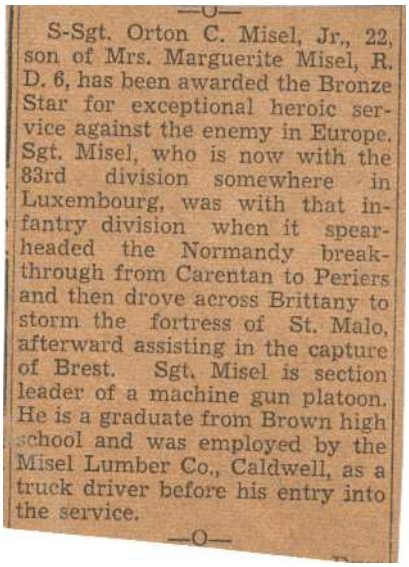


Diagram of the action

This fight involved our Platoon. There were roughly thirty men in a Platoon. There was a Machine Gun Platoon. Each Platoon had two Sections. There were two Staff Sergeants. Then you had four Squads each with a Buck Sergeant. So, a Staff Sergeant had two Squads and two Buck Sergeants under him. A Staff Sergeant roughly had about fifteen under him. You had Jeep drivers who were assigned a couple Jeeps, but they only had them where Jeeps could go.



—O—

S-Sgt. Orton C. Misel, Jr., 22, son of Mrs. Marguerite Misel, R. D. 6, has been awarded the Bronze Star for exceptional heroic service against the enemy in Europe. Sgt. Misel, who is now with the 83rd division somewhere in Luxembourg, was with that infantry division when it spearheaded the Normandy breakthrough from Carentan to Periers and then drove across Brittany to storm the fortress of St. Malo, afterward assisting in the capture of Brest. Sgt. Misel is section leader of a machine gun platoon. He is a graduate from Brown high school and was employed by the Misel Lumber Co., Caldwell, as a truck driver before his entry into the service.

—O—

Newspaper article in the Daily Jefferson of the Bronze Star Medal

On the 7th we pulled back and went over to our left a couple hedgerows and attacked early in the morning. We just lined up rifles and machine guns. We just lined up in a straight line and then went over the hedgerow and just started firing. That's what was called marching fire. It was about like in the Civil War. We just kept firing to keep the Germans' heads down. And while we were doing this, right in the middle of it, they would start shelling us, the Germans. Then our own artillery started falling short and they were shelling us. Then one of our own planes, I think it was a P47, came over and strafed us. About that time my machine gun quit firing. I thought, "My gosh, how can anybody ever get through this?" But I had to take my machine gun apart right there. I laid down, the Germans had us pinned down, and took it apart. I couldn't see anything wrong with it, so I put it back together. Just as soon as shelling let up, we got up and I pulled the trigger. The gun started firing. I don't know why, but it just started firing. So, we took the next hedgerow.

During this period, according to a Time Life book, they had what they called the Liberation. That was the second book after D-Day, The Invasion. It says that when we attacked, the 83rd Division had so many casualties that the German's Parachute Commander released captured medics to help with our casualties. He said, according to Time Life, that he hoped that General Macon would be as generous to him if he were in the same position that we were in. We suffered heavy casualties. We didn't have casualties that amounted to anything before we were attacking. We were just holding getting ready. The whole Front was trying to break out of the beachhead. But on the 4th of July 1944, the whole Front, not only us but also the whole Front was trying to break out. Our Regiment had about three hundred killed in that first twenty days of attacking.

The Division had three Regiments, the 329th, 330th, and 331st. Ours was the 329th. Each Regiment had three Battalions and then each Battalion had four Companies. But actual combatants, you had three Rifle Companies and your Machine Gun Company that actually attacked.

Then about the 9th of July they pulled us back offline, back a couple hedgerows. We were still being shelled and we weren't attacking. We didn't have enough men left to attack so we were waiting on replacements. While we were getting replacements, a fellow came up along the hedgerows coming in as a replacement. He asked if anybody in our outfit was from Ohio. There was just like one Platoon that was there. A Platoon would have about thirty men more or less, but then we were down to about half a dozen. But anyway, this guy comes up and wanted to know if anybody was from Ohio. I said, "Yeah, me and Kenny Maier are from Ohio." (Kenny and I went in together and came home together. Both of us were in the hospital for a while but we came into the war together and came home together.) Then he said, "Where about?" I said, "Well, around Columbus. He said, "Oh? Where about?" I told him, "Well, east of Columbus." The fellow said, "Where?" Kenny and I said, "Well, we're from Cambridge." He said, "I'm from Cambridge!" We got to talking there and Dick Greer was there. Dick Greer was from Cambridge, too. In fact, Dick stayed with us up until The Battle of the Bulge when he got hit. But anyway, we got to talking to this guy. He said his name was Lorain Tedrick. (He is listed in the Regimental History as being casualty. He was killed.) I found out that he and my wife's brother ran around together. But anyway, Lorain and I talked and found out that Ruth's brother worked with his mother at the drugstore, DeFrance Drugstore. He was in a Rifle Company.

About the 26th of July 1944, we broke out the hedgerows. We had bombers come over and drop bombs. It really shook the ground. It gave you a headache. We didn't know it at the time, but to our left our bombs had hit our own troops. In the two days that they bombed us we had a hundred twenty-five of our men killed with the bombs. But we did break out of the hedgerows. Ernie Pyle was there. He wrote about it. The planes laid down smoke, but the wind made the smoke drift back into our own lines. And so, the planes bombed us. We never had a really good bond with the Air Corp, but nevertheless that's why we got out of the hedgerows. There for a while Eisenhower was afraid we weren't going to get out of there and that the Germans were going to push us back into the Channel. But we broke out of there.

After we left Carentan I didn't see another town for a long time. After that the Germans fell back. I got together with Lorain one evening and we talked and visited. That'd be about the end of July.

By August we were through most of the hedgerows. After we broke out of the hedgerows, we went down towards Avaranches by truck. We attacked St. Malo, St. Servan and Dirnard. St. Malo was the main name. We took trucks up a good ways and we dug in overnight. I was by then a Staff Sergeant and Section Leader. (On the 18th of July 1944, I became a Sergeant and a Squad Leader. Then on the 24th of July 1944, I became a Staff Sergeant and a Section Leader.)

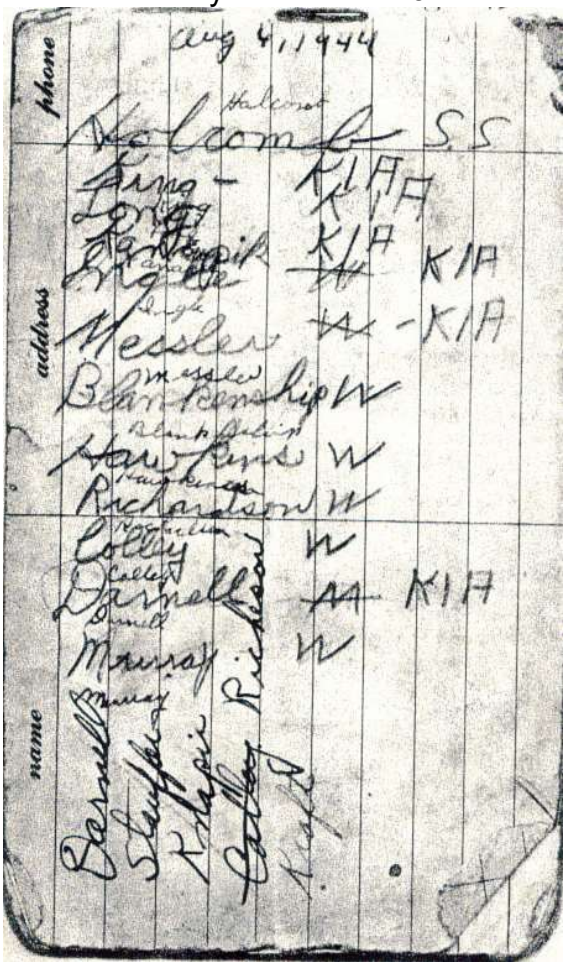
I think it was the 6th but it could have been the 8th of August 1944, I'm not sure, we attacked toward St. Servan in the Gulf of St. Malo. As we were moving down along a road into a field, I was lying next to a Rifleman who had just come in as a

replacement. We had gotten pinned down with artillery from the Germans. I looked over to my left at him and we got to talking, had never seen him before and never saw him after that. Anyway, I saw he had a mechanical pencil in his pocket. I had a pencil when I worked at the hardware in Cambridge, Hastings Piston Ring pencil that had the top of it all worn off. It had like a brass top. I asked him where he'd got it and he said from back on the beach. When he came in on the beach, they told him he could have anything he wanted that was lying there. When we landed on the beach, we left our duffel bags behind. They told us when we got off the boat that someday we'd get our stuff back. We never did and that's what had happened to our things. They had just dumped everything onto the beach. We got off the boats in June and this was August. We got to talking and he said, "Do you want it?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "They just threw away anything that nobody wanted. And I saw that pencil." So, he gave it to me. I still think I have that pencil. I brought it home with me and it's in a drawer somewhere. But anyway, it was my pencil. The chances of all these hundreds of people coming in as replacements and this Rifleman that I had never seen before or since, that we laid down beside each other and he had my pencil.

While I was lying there beside him, one of my men sent word to me that one of the fellows in my Section who carried a water can, (we had water cooled machine guns; they had a heavy water can and a hose that you hooked up so the steam condensed keeping your machine gun cool), got tired of carrying it and he just left it. So, I went back and found it. I came back up and I chewed him out because we needed that. We were then on to a little flat, it looked to me like a little garden or something. You looked down over a valley and there was a barnyard and a house. We delivered fire, machine gun fire, thinking if anybody were there, we'd take care of them. We attacked and got down across a little stream. It had an old stone bridge across it for farm wagons or something. Then we were by this house and barnyard. I had my men out in the open field across this little stream. There were about thirty of us. I was up front watching because the Germans were shelling us, and I was watching them because we had to move on forward. It got to be along in the afternoon when a man yelled at me and said that they needed me. So, I went back and here I didn't know at the time, but the Germans were shelling us from over on a hilltop. The Riflemen were under fire and they came back. In the meantime, after the field was being shelled, I brought my men in and I thought they'd be safe in this ditch. It was a little dry run just up from this barnyard. So, I put my men in this ditch, and I was up front watching until we could go again. Some of my men came up that evening and said to come back. When I got back, here the Germans had landed shells in the ditch and ended up our Section had six killed and six wounded. They were just lying in that ditch so close together, their head between another's legs. Germans had just kept pushing back the Riflemen, so Riflemen crowded into that ditch. There were more Riflemen killed then we had killed. The Germans saw the Riflemen backing down into that ditch. They didn't know we were there probably. But they saw the Riflemen and aimed at them and that's when they all got killed. I had a little Hallmark address book in my shirt pocket, and I wrote down the names. I went through the bodies. I didn't have to go through dog tags or anything like that. I knew the people and wrote their names down. It's still in my desk today,

those names I wrote down that night. It was getting late and we had no medics. I had no idea where the Aid Station was. It was back somewhere. The ones that could walk, I told my men, "Just follow those guys."

I had a kid by the name of John F. Long. He was the one I jumped all over for leaving the can and the water. He was one of the ones killed. You couldn't feel bad about it because it just happened. The other killed were Charlie A. Darnell, Sergeant George Knapik and Sergeant James R. Ingle, those were the guys I knew from the States, and John C. Mishler and King. I didn't know King's first name. Mishler was the Number One Gunner then. And Ingle, Jimmy Ingle was a Sergeant. I'd determined the rest were already dead, but Ingle and Mishler were still alive talking to me. I'd gone trying to see what I could do because they were just laying there. They were just crammed; one's head was between the other's legs. Mishler kept telling me, "Well, you take care of Ingle, he's hurt worse than I am." So, I went to Ingle. I just rolled on my knees there; I didn't have to go anywhere. And Ingle told me, "No, you take care of Mishler because he's hurt worse than I am." I saw he had a stomach wound and he wanted water. We weren't supposed to give any water but, I still remember, I could see that it wasn't going to make any difference. So, I went ahead and got him some water. Within a few minutes they both were dead. There were about 3 of the original men from the States and the rest were replacements.



Page from Hallmark Address Book

After we had gone through the bodies, one of the men told me that Cam had taken off. Cam Holcomb, he was one of the originals. Back in the hedgerows he had been sent back because of nerves. They just doped him up and sent him back online. During this battle he took off, but I reported that I had sent him to the rear. That way he wouldn't be classified as a deserter or anything. He shouldn't have been there to start with. He probably was sent back to a hospital or something, but he never came back to our outfit.

It was getting towards dark by the time we got everything organized. We pulled back up to the garden where we'd started the morning before. We stayed there all night. The kitchen came up and fed us. That was either the 6th or 8th. I always thought it was the 6th of August. I'm not real positive because I didn't know one day from the other.

The next morning then I went through the bodies because we had to have the ammunition, we took the cigarettes and K-rations. I found a letter in Ingle's pocket. That's what we'd do. When you had a little lull, we'd write letters to our families at home. We'd date them ahead. Here this letter was dated ahead. Lieutenant Adams was our Platoon Leader. He and I talked about it and so I told him this was going to be the last letter they're going to get from their son, and they won't know what day it is. So, we went ahead and mailed the letter.

The next morning, we attacked, and it was pretty easy going then. The Germans had let up, and then withdrew. We went into this little town. The Riflemen were with us somewhere. We always worked together. I didn't know at night where they'd be because they'd be in their own quarters or wherever. After we got into open country, we weren't that close, whereas in the hedgerows we were side by side. Now we'd be just within yelling distance.

Anyway, we were in this town and I remember the house was a kind of angle corner with a front door and steps up to it. That night we had a house to sleep in for the first time since we'd left the States. Before we were in the hedgerows and then back in tents. That night was the first night we slept inside. Then the next morning we attacked. We went through a grape arbor. And I remember they must have been laying sewer because there were big cement sewer tile or pipe about three or four feet in diameter laying there. We were heading for St. Malo and St. Servan. There were three cities, Dirnard, St. Malo and St. Servan, and the Gulf of St. Malo. The next morning or the next night it was, we got shelled. We were in the house. I found a pair of pliers (they're still in my desk) and a cigarette lighter. The pliers, one end was like a screwdriver. I could use them to work on my machine guns. So, I stuck them in my pocket, and I brought them home with me.

We continuously got replacements. Some of them were killed before I even knew their names. Well, I knew their names, just not their first name. I knew their last names. We just kept getting replacements all the time. However, the next morning, we hadn't gotten any replacements yet. But after we captured St. Malo and St. Servan then we got reinforcements.

There was a Citadel out in the bay, the Gulf of St. Malo. We were trying to capture it, but the Germans wouldn't surrender. It was an old fortress, centuries old fortress. It was out in the Gulf with a walkway up to it. It was out in the water and had like a ramp-like walk up into it. The Germans had it fortified. They had the island. The Germans had artillery on this island so they could defend the fortress. We got up in a school, about the third story. I had my machine guns firing on the Citadel trying to get them to surrender. I had my machine guns pointed out the window toward the fortress. I was around the corner on a window sitting straddling the window and with binoculars I was watching where the machine gun fire tracers were firing. While I was doing this a shell came in, an artillery shell came in the window below me and about blew me out of the window and it tore up the iron stairway. So, we got the machine guns out of there. On the island they could see us and that's

where they were shelling us from. But the shell came in the window below me, my legs hanging down there and it hit the stairway. If it'd hit the wall, the outside wall we'd have been done. So, we got out of there. I had to climb over the stairway because it was all entangled down there. Anyway, we stayed there for several days until finally the Citadel surrendered because we were going to Napalm bomb it. In the meantime, while we were waiting for that, Lentz and I were in a house. The house was a stone house. Most of the buildings there were stone. We were upstairs in this house while Lieutenant Adams was downstairs. Lentz and I decided to take advantage of the beds since we hadn't slept in a bed since we left the States. Artillery shells would come in and we'd hear artillery shrapnel coming across the floor through the window. We'd said, "Well, let's go downstairs. No, let's wait until the next shell comes." Pretty soon another shell would come. You'd hear this trickling across the floor. Because there was a bed and we hadn't slept in a bed for months and months we'd decide to wait a little longer. We didn't mind getting hit; we just didn't like getting bothered by the shelling. Finally, the Germans quit shelling so we stayed up there.

A day or so later we decided to go down and check out the cliff that was over the water. We saw over the Citadel a white flag waving. We thought, "Boy, they gave up." So, we went down over this steep bank. Trees were growing on it, like small trees. You had to hang on to them to get down to the water's edge. Down there was a barracks, German barracks. So, we went in there and then we found a big Swastika flag. It was a German flag flying over this facility. It was a wood building, like a barracks. And there was a radio in there and Lentz got the radio. As we were looking around in there, they started shelling us. The Germans started to shell us from this island, so we took off. It was just like in a dream or nightmare, as you're climbing up the bank you keep going backwards instead of forwards. That's just the way our feet kept sliding out from under us. They were shelling us but didn't hit us. We finally got up to the top of the cliff, which was a long way up. Lentz kept hanging onto the radio and I hung onto the Swastika flag. (I still have the flag) When we got back, it'd be about a quarter mile or so up to where the house was, Lieutenant Adams jumped on us and said, "I should have known you fellows were probably in trouble."

Lentz and I were always doing something. We weren't afraid. We had no fear. One day in the hedgerows, we were getting shelled and one of the fellows wanted us to move. I told him, "No, if I'm going to die, I'd just as soon die here instead of over there somewhere so no, we're not going to move."

But before that, the day before, getting back to the hedgerows, a Rifleman from Cleveland, Ohio, came up. He had a sister and he was still a private. He said they wanted to make him a Sergeant. He said, "No, we've got plenty of money, we don't need any money. I don't need the money." He said, "Sergeants get killed. I'm not going to be a Sergeant." That's when I became a Staff Sergeant. I was talking to him and the Germans started shelling us, so we got back in the foxholes. I remember he was off to my left probably twenty yards and back another twenty yards along the hedgerow going the other way. He'd just got back there, and he got hit and killed.

At this same hedgerow in the foxhole where I was dug in, we were stalemated there for about a week or so, a good week. I became a Sergeant and then a Staff Sergeant before I even knew I was a Sergeant. Before, I just took charge then I found out later I was in charge. Anyway, while we were dug in there one night, Germans always at night threw in a lot of artillery to hold us down. We didn't pay any attention to it. We just dug down in our holes. The 4th Armor Division had come up in the afternoon on my right flank and around the corner of the hedgerow. So, at night the Germans started shelling. Well, the 4th Armor Division took off and came back past me. It wasn't dark yet. So, I had a couple of my men go over after they took off and check and make sure the Germans weren't coming in on my flank. They found this machine gun that the 4th Armor Division had left. So, they picked it up and brought it back. On the side of it had the 4th Armor Division and had their Squad and stuff on it, which we never did. I remember it was in white paint. My men just threw it down in their foxhole, so we'd have an extra machine gun. About an hour later or so it was just almost dark, and this Staff Sergeant came up and told me that the Germans had taken their machine gun. His guys had taken off and the Germans took their machine gun. I didn't say anything. He was Section Leader same as I was only his was with the Armor Division. I didn't say anything about it. We kept that gun; in fact, I used it later when we had a tank run over one of our guns. You could still see the white paint on there saying the 4th Armor, which as I'd said, ours didn't say anything on them. Back in Cambridge, Christmas of 1945, I met Howard King and discovered he was that Staff Sergeant. He was a friend of Ruth's brother, Harvey, and I told him I took his gun! It was hard to believe that of the thousands of troops in the hedgerows I would meet two friends of Ruth's brothers. But anyway, from then on, the 4th Armor became quite a Division. In fact, their Battalion Commander became head of the military, Abrahms, Clayton Abrahms. At that time, he was a Major, Battalion Commander.

Photo, Sergeant Carl Reidle (OH)

Now back to St. Servan, that was pretty easy. We got replacements in again. Carl Reidle came back. (He was from Mineral City, OH. At home they called him Riddle. In the Army they called him Reidle. Kenny and I went up to see him after the war. We had a hard time finding him since we pronounced his name differently than they did!) He'd been wounded. He was a Squad Leader. Then there was Dick Greer, who was a Sergeant in the States who had given me a hard time and had told me just because we were from the same town, he wasn't

going to do me any favors. Anyway, he'd go to sleep and wouldn't put his men on guard at night. So, Lieutenant Adams said, "Do you think he should be relieved?" Since we had Reidle back and he was just an extra Sergeant. I said, "We're going to have to do something." So, they demoted Greer and I think he was relieved. He didn't want that responsibility. So, Carl Reidle took over one of my Squads. I had Reidle and a fellow by the name of Stauffer over my Squads.

Photo, July 1945, Germany, Sergeant Stauffer (PA)

Stuart Stauffer. Back in the hedgerows Stuart Stauffer wasn't afraid of anything either. Didn't bother him a bit. He went back to get his Purple Heart when he got wounded. He went to get his Purple Heart and almost got killed getting back up to the foxhole. Normally, they sent them up to us later. We didn't get them when we got hit. I didn't at least. He did. But anyway, Stauffer was with us back in States. He was a Dutchman, Pennsylvania Dutchman. He would say Ws for Vs. He'd call Sergeant Voltz Sergeant Woltz. I said, "Why don't you call a V for a W and a W for a V then you would be right." But he never did. He wasn't afraid of anything and you couldn't lose him. Anytime I had to send somebody for something, I'd send Stauffer. He wasn't afraid and he didn't mind. He was short and stocky.

FLASHBACK

It was a nice sunny day the day before we crossed the Channel. Standing on a grassy knoll we had a briefing. A Major, I think, I didn't know who he was, but this officer told us, "Now you're going into combat and you have nothing to worry about 'cause if you're killed you won't know it and if you're not killed you worried for nothing so just forget about it." So, I took him at his word. I never crouched down in a foxhole. I was always out watching what was going on. I was a leader and I led.

Another thing. After we got to Carentan, Lentz and I, before this, we were never really friendly as he was a Section leader and I was a Machine Gunner. Anyway, this day, we got curious about what was down in the town. We were right at the edge of the town waiting to attack. He and I went down the street into the town and we saw a coffin in a doorway with flowers on it. We went up to looked at it. There were about half a dozen steps up into the house. The door was open, and the coffin was just lying in the open doorway. This was in June 1944. We wondered if there was a body in it. So, we walked back. Lentz had a bayonet and I carried a knife of some kind; I think I had a trench knife. Anyway, we got in there and we raised the lid and you could smell it. Yea, there was a body in there. So, we walked on down the street a ways. There wasn't anybody else on the streets and we weren't supposed to be there. Well, we got to wondering whether that was a man or a woman? So, we went back and opened it up. It was an old man. When we got back, we got heck because we were down there running around. But that's when Lentz and I started being together. After I got promoted and we were equals then we ran together.

Back at St Malo, we were at the school where the Germans were firing at us. We called for planes. We were going to Napalm bomb, firebomb, the Citadel so the Germans gave up. Once they surrendered, we left, about the 15th of August 1944, and went up along the Loire River around Toures. There we had it pretty easy for a while. We were in this little town. We ran motorized patrols up and down the river to make sure the Germans didn't come across the river. We had it really easy going. There our men were in pup tents in the yard. Lentz and I and Lieutenant Adams, we slept in a house. One night I went with the Jeep driver. Going through this little town he had a grease gun, we called it, it was like a little submachine gun. Jeep drivers carried them. I picked it up off the floor of the Jeep. It was night. I asked him if this thing was all right and if it was on safety. He said, "Oh, yea. It's on safety." I just point it out along the houses and pulled the trigger and boy, it rattled. Bullets just bounced off the houses. It wasn't on safety. Evidently, I didn't hit anybody since we didn't hear anything about it.

One night it was moonlight. I was driving and the road was curved but I went straight ahead and hit a pile of gravel. It just looked like part of the road. We had to get out, the regular driver and I, and get a shovel to dig out then we went on.

Things were so easy at that point that Kenny Maier and I got a pass into Toures, a fairly large city. We went into the Grande Hotel and ate there. Kenny and I and couple others had to walk across stones in the river because the bridge had been blown. We were camped on the other side of the river. While there we met a French Lieutenant, a member of the Free French Army. He ate with us and visited with us. He spoke good English. A lot of the people in Europe spoke English. They taught English in the schools. Most of the young people spoke English at least enough so you could understand them.

Photo, Staff Sergeants Lentz and Chalick

That's the place where I came off patrol and there were pup tents sitting there. Dick Greer was on patrol. When on patrol we had a gun mount on the dash of the Jeep so that you could fire. He took the gun off of there and he happened to pull the trigger. Here, the gun was loaded, and it fired into a pup tent. We looked into the pup tent and no one was in there, thank goodness. But that's the way things happened.

Went to Angers, maybe before Toures, I'm not sure, but they're both in the same general area. We were on the edge of the town and I was strictly on my own. That's probably when I first started being on my own. Before, we were usually all together. From this point on, I wasn't sure where the rest of the Company was or even our Platoon. Lentz and I weren't together after Angers. We were attached to different Rifle Companies. To clarify, the first thing you had was a Squad, then a Section, then a Platoon, (for example we were Machine Guns, Heavy Weapons

Platoon), then A, B, C and D Companies, and these Companies formed a Battalion. You had three Rifle Companies. Each Rifle Company had a Machine Gun Platoon and Mortar Platoon, but they were what you called light weapons. They had air-cooled machine guns and 60mm mortars. But we were a Heavy Weapons Company. We had no Riflemen. We had all heavy weapons. We had 30 caliber water cooled machine guns and 81mm mortars. So, we had two Platoons of machine guns in D Company and one Platoon of mortars. Which were three Squads. This formed a Company then A, B, C and D formed a Battalion. The next step up was a Regiment, which was three Battalions. Three Regiments formed a Division. Like we had a 329, 330 and 331. But that was your breakdown of the troops. Of course, you have all kinds of attachment units, artillery and anti-tank and these types of things. We were never back that far to see them.

In Angers and Toures we had it pretty nice. We were just more or less getting replacements because we had gotten beat up so badly that they were putting others online. Course, maybe the whole Front was sort of reorganizing. Part of it was we were running out of fuel. We were running beyond our supply lines because we had no ports. We were still landing and bring in supplies on the beaches.

We then went to Orleans. There we were static. We weren't doing anything. While we were there, we had a fellow, I believe his name of was Sam McGill. He was later on This is Your Life. Ralph Edwards had him on because he arranged the capture of 20,000 prisoners. I met him after the war at a reunion up in Cleveland, OH. He was talking about it. He was a nice guy. At the time he was just a Lieutenant

We were just running protection while at Angers, Toures and Orleans to make sure the Germans didn't cross the river. Our forces were trying to build up again.

After Orleans we were in pup tents. We went to Luxemburg. On the 24th of September we were in position in Luxemburg at a little crossroads. We weren't in any town. There was a bakery there. There was a little band of trees almost like a park across the road from it and that's where I had my men. I don't know where the rest of the men were but that's where I had my men. I went over to that bakery and brought some dark bread.

We were there for a couple days probably. Bill Jirles, who was a Section leader in the 2nd Platoon, came to me. He had gotten hit in Normandy. He had been in the hospital and had come back to the outfit a few days earlier, probably around the Toures area. He came back and told me he was all shook up. He had had 6 of his men killed. His Squad had captured some Germans. One of his guys that survived told him, "We had them, holding them prisoners. Then someone yelled out something in German and the prisoners hit the ground and the Germans killed our men." Bill was all shook up and I think it probably was battle fatigue cause he went to the hospital and he never came back. I understand he got like a manager's job at a hotel in Paris where military people were.

Up to this point we hadn't had any casualties since we left St Malo and St Servan. I didn't have any wounded after that, up to this point. I don't think I had any casualties in Luxemburg, that's the 15 I had under me. After we took St Servan we were more or less defensive at this time. That was nice 'cause from then on I was on my own. I was attached to a Rifle Company and I was equal to a Rifle Lieutenant

We then went down towards Grevenmacher. We were in a hunting lodge there. We had our machine guns set up there. There were civilians in their houses in some of the areas and we felt so badly because we were tearing up their houses. They treated us all right. They treated us like liberators. But Grevenmacher had been evacuated.

Postcard

After that we went on up a hill above Echternach. That's where I got into a conversation with a Lieutenant. To start with, this was the first time we'd been attached to, I'm pretty sure, it was B Company. I didn't know where our Headquarters was. We were following this Lieutenant. It was evening and it wasn't quite dark. We went up a little trail, like a wagon trail. It was up a hill. We got almost to the top of it. The Lieutenant's men were leading. He was leading. They turned around and came back. I didn't know where we were going as he was leading. He came back to where we were in a mill. It was like an old feed mill. His men were downstairs and his Company Headquarters was in a house close to it. My men were upstairs in this feed mill. It had a grinder and elevator in it. We decided we

would go back up the hill in the morning. It was pretty chilly. It was nice in the mill. The Lieutenant came up and asked me if my men were afraid to go up the hill and I said, “My men go where I lead them.” He said, “My men don’t want to go.” He said, “They found a dead body up there and they don’t want to go. Will you come down and talk to my men?” I said, “No, I don’t want to talk to your men, but I’ll tell you what, I’ll lead, and your men follow me.” He knew where we were going as he received the orders not me. Our objective was a holding position. We had driven the Germans out and didn’t want them to come back.

I never got the orders as to where we were going. Lieutenant Adams got the orders and gave them to me. You were told where to go and it was up to you to figure out how to get there. You knew what direction you were going. I don’t know how but you just knew. As time went by you learned. You knew what your objective was. How you did it was up to you.

Photo, November 1944 Outpost near Echternach, Luxemburg

Photo, November 1944 Echternach, Luxemburg, Rodney Haley at outpost

Photo, November 1944, Echternach, Luxemburg - Kraft, Stauffer and Bigness at outpost

Photo, October 1944 Echternach, Luxemburg, Frien at an outpost

We went up the hill the next day. They followed me. From then on, that Lieutenant, I didn't know his name, but he knew mine, was really nice to me. But that Lieutenant had with him a West Pointer. He told me that the other Lieutenant was a West Pointer. There were two trees on this slope that sloped down towards the river and we were watching the river so we could see if any Germans tried to cross the river. If so, we could fire down this slope on them with our machine guns. There were two trees there and the first thing this Lieutenant did was climb one of the trees with his binoculars and look out there to see if he could see any Germans. Heavens, you didn't have to climb the tree. You could see from the slope. I put my guns on the slope. He wanted me to put one of my guns under one of these two trees. I said, "You're crazy. If my guys open up the German could use that as an aiming point. No. I'm not putting them under those trees." We got into an argument about it. I wouldn't do it. He reported me back to his Company Commander who was a Captain. I didn't know this was going on. I didn't pay any attention to them. I was used to being on my own. We were here for about two weeks, in this position, October 1944.

Photo, Me with my shiny cowboy boot tops and Percy Wooten

This is where I found a pair of cowboy boots. I cut off the tops and sewed them on to my Army shoes. At that time, we were wearing leggings. When I was back in the hospital I had them all shined up and they looked great.

FLASHBACK

About the end of September 1944 at the hunting lodge, there was a fancy home, estate. I went up there and we found a winery and it had liquor, old bottles. We poured it in a can and lit it. We went down in the basement of the hunting lodge, it was about a 100 feet from this house, and it had concrete all around it. It was made out of logs with a concrete floor so down in the basement we were safe. I had my machine guns setting out in the fields. If we got shelled, we could get into this basement. The men who weren't on guard would stay there. They took turns, one-hour turns, on guard. The artillery observation outfit had four men at the house. The house, an estate, was up on the highway and the hunting lodge down below it. It was a fancy hunting lodge. It had a kitchen. The Germans started shelling us and the guys from the Artillery took off. They were observers. The Artillery unit was somewhere way behind and the observers would call for fire. My men went up there and here the observers had left a Coleman stove, just a little round, one burner stove. It used gasoline. So, my men picked it up and brought it down. A day or so later, it was sunny and the guys were outside using it to heat something to

eat. A Lieutenant and another guy came up. We were about two or three miles up from anyone else. They said their men had left a stove and that they had come back to get it, but it was gone. They wanted to know if we had seen it. I told them this was the only stove we had, the one we were using. The Lieutenant said, “That isn’t ours ‘cause ours had the chain broken on it.” The chain was attached to the fill cap, so it won’t get lost. They left. The chain on this stove was hanging down there broken but he said, “No that’s not ours.” He took off. So, from then on, we had it and we used it later on for a heater in our Jeep. We drove across Germany after that.

Now back to the trees and the West Point Lieutenant that reported me to the Captain of C Company, I think. They got a hold of my Lieutenant, Lieutenant Adams, then they went to the Battalion, and then the Regiment. I didn’t know all this was going on. Finally, Colonel Crabill, he evidently came down and talked to somebody, because later after I was already getting ready to move out, this Lieutenant, the Lieutenant that had come to me about talking to his men, came to me and told me that Colonel Crabill said I was right. He said, “I thought you were, but so and so said he didn’t think so.” He said, “If you ever need anything you let me know.” I didn’t know his name, but he and I became friends. In fact, when I was coming back from the hospital he was there at the truck when I was getting off to go back to my outfit. He told me, “Boy, they’ll be glad to see you back.” He was a nice guy.

Colonel Crabill, he was a crusty guy, but I really liked him, he wasn’t afraid. Back in the hedgerows he’d be out there wandering around checking things out. He was a full Colonel. He was an older guy probably in his fifties. One time, when we were fighting, I had my machine guns set up to protect our right flank. This was in Luxemburg. He told me, “You know as soon as we leave a position the Germans start shelling us so you shouldn’t do that.” I told him, “I know that, but I’ve got to protect the right flank.” He said, “Yea, but then the Germans will start shelling you.” I said, “I know that, but I’ve got to protect this right flank, that’s what I’ve always been doing.” Finally, he said, “Sergeant, those are your machine guns and you do what you damn well please with them.” And I said, “Sir, I will.” Still we got along well and he’d stick up for me. I liked him.

Anyway, we kept jumping around, back and forth, down to Grevenmacher then back. We had already driven the Germans out, so we were just protecting. One time we were in a little town and I had Reidle, one of the Squad Leaders, in a schoolhouse on my right. I always stayed with one of my Sergeants. The other would be on his own. The one that I felt was more stable I’d have on his own and I’d stay with the other. The Germans were coming around the hillside. We were in this little town and I had a machine gun sitting out in a little garden. Reidle started firing on the Germans. And boom something would knock him back. He’d get up and boom down he’d go again. We later found out that up on the bank behind us by the trees there was an anti-tank gun or artillery piece firing over our heads and we were getting the muzzle blast. Our own guys were knocking us back.

Photo, Sergeant Reidle and Haley

Here we were in a house downstairs and the owners of the house upstairs. It was cold and we had a fire, but the floor kept catching on fire. The owner kept trying to keep us from burning the house down. We didn't burn it down. We were there for a couple days. We kept jumping around. We were in Grevenmacher two or three times. We went up a hill into a cave and at night we'd go back to Grevenmacher. That's when we were in Platoon formation. Lieutenant Adams was with us this time. We'd stay there at the house at night. Then we pulled back out the next night. For some reason they said that wasn't part of the military objective and they didn't need that. Then we came back later and took it again.

When we came back later, we went down into this winery. And it was great. They would use rainwater in the toilets and when we didn't have water, we used champagne. There was champagne down in the basement and we'd open a bottle and pour it into a bucket then pour it into the toilet to flush the stools. We didn't always have water.

A Jeep would come about half mile to a mile from us as that was as far as they could go because the road was blocked. At a certain time, my men would go up there and meet him and they would give us water and rations and mail. I was on my own but there was a Rifle Company there, too, but we didn't hardly have any connections with each other down there. We sometimes got mail every day depending on what the circumstances were. When we were fighting in the hedgerows, we didn't get any mail but when we were in the defensive positions, we got mail and it was pretty good living.

FLASHBACK
I found out about Cashie being born a couple months after he was born cause during the Invasion, they weren't even sure we would be able to hold the beach. Eventually, I got a letter from my mother talking about the baby. That was probably 3-4 weeks after he was born. Lieutenant Adams would ask me what I had, a boy or girl, and I'd say, "I don't know. It was a baby." I didn't get the cablegram for about another 4-5 weeks. That's when I found out it was a boy, Cashie.

Photo, November 1944 Luxemburg – 1st Platoon

Back to Luxemburg, we'd come back and forth. Well, then there in October 1944 Lieutenant Adams went on leave to Paris. So, they called me in off line into Company Headquarters from my Section and sent the other Section, there were two Sections in a Platoon, Sergeant Brown's Section was sent to Grevenmacher. I was sent up to take charge of the Platoon while Lieutenant Adams was in Paris. Lieutenant Adams was able to take leave, as things were pretty static then in our area. We were put there, in Luxemburg, to get regrouped. Every once in a while, we'd have trouble but basically it was calm at this time. They called me in. So, I had my men there and we took care of business and Sergeant Brown was in Grevenmacher about five miles away from Company Headquarters. While I was there Captain Squires (he was the one that had given me a hard time back in the States) sent word, I was upstairs with my men, he wanted some of my men to go out and gather up American bodies. The bodies laid there for weeks in Luxemburg. Well, I went down to Captain Squires and told him he couldn't have any of my men because my men knew tomorrow, they may be lying out there. They had mortar crews back there, the guys back at the Headquarters. I said to send those guys out. Captain Squires said, "All right." He didn't argue with me. I was going to argue. I wasn't going to let him have any of my men.

Photo, 1st Section Squad – front row Poole, Bigness; back row Kraft, Stauffer

Each Section had two Jeeps that would get down within about a ½ mile or so of Grevenmacher, and they'd be there at a certain time and we'd send men up to meet them. We'd get the mail and K-rations. That night the Sergeants under Sergeant Brown sent word with one of the Jeep drivers that I should relieve Brown and pull Brown's Section out of Grevenmacher. They said that I should go down and take charge. So, I told Captain Squires that I was going to go down and relieve Brown and his Section and Brown would be in charge at Company Headquarters and I'd be down there in Grevenmacher with my Section. So, that's what we did. We really had it made in Grevenmacher. That's where there was a big winery. I've got picture and postcards of this area. We didn't have any water, but we had lots of champagne. It was the only place in the whole wide area that had a toilet, running water for a toilet. This was a fancy Headquarters in the winery. In the hallway down in the basement there were thousands of gallons of champagne in bottles and vats. So, whoever used the toilet, they'd take a scrub bucket and go down in the basement. I had a pair of

pliers, so they'd pop the corks, they'd lose some of it on the floor, but they'd fill up the bucket with champagne. That's what we flushed the toilet with, champagne. None of my men would drink the champagne. I never had any trouble with anybody drinking. They were always afraid that the alcohol would thin the blood and they'd bleed to death if they were injured. At this point the Germans were along the Moselle River.

Photo, November 1944 Luxemburg- Rodney Haley

As I said, we really had it made at Grevenmacher. I had to have a man stand guard duty. We had our machine guns set up and headed down the street. We had them in the doorways so they couldn't be seen. I told my men," Other than when being on guard duty, just pretend you aren't even in the Army. Nobody around here is going to boss you so just pretend you're not in the Army. You have to do your guard duty, but other than that, you just pretend you're not in the Army." I think they kind of enjoyed it. They'd go out and look around town and they got a lot of pictures. They dressed up. The town was completely deserted. It was a small village and then all around there were vineyards up on the hills.

I think about two days before Thanksgiving, I don't know where the Chaplain came from but a Chaplain, a Rifle Platoon, couple Lieutenants and my men were with me. The winery had a room like a boardroom for the officers of the company and it had a long table in it. There was some fancy dinnerware. There was a sewer pipe from the basement of the winery about 4 feet across. So, some of the men found around the village a cook stove and they carried it through that sewer pipe back to the winery. We hooked it up to a chimney. We used it and cooked a chicken. One of my men tried to catch a pig but it started squealing so he let it go. There was, also, a hotel there. I wasn't in any of these places, but my men wandered around there. I always stayed in my own Headquarters there with the guns. My men found flour and stuff. We had a nice meal. There were a couple dozen of us. The Chaplain gave an invocation. It was really something. It was a fancy room. One of our guys had been in cooks/bakers school. I don't recall his name, but he'd been with me for a while. Also, at the hotel we found a small can of Libby's pineapple. I think it said Chicago on it. We had some tiny fancy dishes. Every person along the table got a bite of Libby's pineapple. We really lived it up there. The Germans were right across the river. They could have come across there in boats and attacked us. They were supposed to not know we were there. They probably did. At night we'd have a fire. We had briquettes, pressed coal. It was cold weather. We'd get the room warmed up so that in the daytime there wouldn't be any smoke coming out of the chimney.

Photo, November 1944 Luxemburg – Nevius, Finch, Edwards and Faugro

Photo, 1944 Luxemburg – Joe Dudec

Photo, 1944 Luxemburg – Jones and Captain Fissiaro

Photo, November 1944 Luxemburg - Chalick

I had my Headquarters right next to the river and next to the corner of the street so I could see out. It had wood blinds for a black out, so you didn't worry about light going out.

A couple of days later we were called back to Company Headquarters and we were going to go in to the Huertgen Forest to relieve the 4th Division. It was really icy and there was snow on the roads. The roads were slippery and we were in a hurry to get there to relieve them. We went through Bastogne. I remember Bastogne because that was the main place the Germans were trying to capture. There was a five-road intersection there and the Germans were trying to get to Antwerp to disrupt our shipping and supply lines. The Germans had to take Bastogne in order to get to Antwerp. Antwerp was the only harbor we had. This was part of the Battle of the Bulge.

On December 10, 1944 we went into the Huertgen Forest to relieve the 4th Division because they were coming back to take our places. We didn't know it, but we were lucky, because we were really thin, just a token line there. We weren't expecting any trouble. We were thinking the Germans were about whipped. But in the Huertgen Forest the 29th Division and the 4th Division, really got torn up. Anyway, on the way there we were rolling. We came up over a hill and there was an anti-tank gun in front of me being pulled by a Jeep. They'd stopped and we couldn't get stopped. I had my foot hanging out the side of the Jeep. I put it back inside the Jeep and the anti-tank gun, they had it depressed down, and it came right between the wheel and the fender of our Jeep. It blew the tire and bent the wheel. So, we had to jump out of the convoy. We put the on the spare wheel. Then we had to keep

passing as they were driving fast, but we had to keep passing to get back up there because we didn't know where we were going. So, we finally, along before dark, got into the Huertgen Forest. We left Luxemburg and went into the edge of the Huertgen Forest all in one day.

That night we laid down there in the snow. We didn't care if we got hit. We were too tired to worry about it. But then the next morning we were in position and our Regimental History tells about how we had log huts. The Germans or somebody, maybe the American 4th Division, had built them. There are pictures of them in one of the Time Life books. There were some there, but we didn't have them. We just had a hole in the ground. There were like fire breaks between sections of the forest. There were logs across the road and the ground was mud like. That's where I dug in, so as soon as I saw a German come down this road, I'd be able to get them. That's where Dick Greer and I dug in together. There was a German hand grenade lying there. A "potato masher" they called them. It looked like a quart can with a wooden handle. It was right where I had to have my gun. There was some communication wire there. I got everyone behind trees then I went up to it and tied some communication wire around the handle of the grenade, kind of tender like, and then I got behind a tree. Then I pulled it out into a ditch that had water in it so no one would be stepping on it. It didn't go off, thank goodness.

We received a lot of shelling. In the daytime we couldn't get through there. There was a kid by the name of DeCicco. He was a stocky kid and was in the Second Section. He got hit and for some reason I was there when he was coming by. I talked to him and he told me, "Sergeant, I was a good soldier, wasn't I?" I don't know whether he thought he hadn't been or what, I don't know, but, anyway, I told him that he'd been a good soldier. I just patted him on the shoulder and that's the last I heard of him. He was really shot up, shot bad. But I'm sure he survived.

We couldn't break out in the daytime. Kept trying, but the Germans kept pushing us back with a lot of artillery. It must have been the 12th or 13th of December, I'm not sure. At the time it was hard to tell what day it was. But anyway, we attacked at night and you'd have to feel your way along and I fell in a ditch. I had some German binoculars I had picked up in Luxemburg and I had a little cover hooked onto them to cover the lens so the lens wouldn't get scratched. I think I was carrying a carbine then. You just fought with whatever you picked up. I could pick up a rifle and machine gun ammunition would fit a rifle, but then if things weren't too bad, then I'd carry a carbine. I always had a 45 in my holster. Anyway, I fell in a ditch and caught a piece of the cover of the binoculars. So, I had to break it off. I scratched the binocular lens on my rifle or carbine barrel.

When we finally got up a ways we stopped for the night. We were standing in water just about two or three inches over our overshoes. This was in cold weather and we had broken through the ice. I felt the muzzle on my carbine and it was plugged with mud. I had rods for my machine guns, but the rifles/carbines just had a chain that dropped down and pulled through to clean it. But I needed something to push the mud out. A kid named Ponte and I, (We corresponded after the war. In fact, he

called me a few years ago for his birthday present. He lived over in Rhode Island or Connecticut and as his birthday present, he got to call me.) were there together. Manuel Ponte, he was Portuguese. He was just a little fellow. Anyway, he was with me. It was dark, in the middle of the night. I finally was able to push the mud out with one of the machine gun rods. However, the rod knocked the follower, where the shells go in, off. It was about two or three inches long. We rolled up our sleeves and felt in the mud and ice water and we found it. I rinsed it off and I took the butt of my 45 and tamped it back down into place. It was just held in with friction. It was all right. Ponte said, "Where did you learn to do these things." I told him that we trained for some of this.

Well, we stayed there 'til daylight, standing in that water. Your feet weren't cold. What was cold was right where the water and your pant legs met. In the war, any time you got wet, body heat was the only thing that would dry you. We didn't have any fires to dry us and we had no clean clothes. We went weeks at a time without taking our clothes off. People back in the rear echelon wouldn't know what that's all about.

The next day we broke out of the forest, about 9 at night. It was dark when we broke out, at the edge of the little town of Gurzenich. This particular night I was with Carl Reidle, or he was with me. We were in like a swamp and we'd dig through the snow to get water. We were tired so we just laid down on ponchos, like a raincoat. We laid down on one of them and covered up with the other one and we went to sleep.

We had to man the guns and I told them to keep working the bolts on them all night, whoever was on guard, because if we didn't, they'd freeze up. There was no anti-freeze yet. Sure enough the next morning the guns were frozen up. So I took oil, I had an oil can there with my tools for my machine gun that one of my guys carried, and I put oil on the barrel and took a rifle butt and drove it back and drew the handle forward until I finally got them loosened up. Once you fired a few rounds, well, then the heat kept them loosened up. Then a day or two later they sent up anti-freeze.

The next day Reidle went with his own Squad. He was with the Second Squad, and Stauffer was there, too. He had the other Squad. Then early the next morning we dug in where we could. Also, there was Tom Berryman. He was a Sergeant. He was a Squad Leader back in the States when I was a PFC. Anyway, I was carrying an extra Sergeant. I didn't have any place for him. He came back in Luxemburg from the hospital. So, he was with me there and he complained about being the "dog robber." I had him running errands for me. He was a little bit grouchy about it. He was older than I was, a good bit older than I. I said, "Tom, I want you with me. I want you to know what's going on because I'm going to get hit. Time's running out. I've gone this long, and I've never been off line and I just know I'm going to get hit. I want you with me. I want you to know what's going on and I want you to take over." From then on then he was okay.

Photo, Tom Berryman

That would have been December 16th, 1944. That morning, or sometime, somebody brought some mail up to us and Ruth had sent me a watch, because I didn't have a watch, and a pair of leather gloves. I kept borrowing a watch from a kid by the name of Bagwell. I had borrowed his watch back in the hedgerows. He got hit and was gone. Then in Luxemburg or somewhere he came back, and I gave his watch back to him and he said, "No, you use it," because I didn't have a watch. Then he got hit again and then came back in Luxemburg before we went into Germany. I, again, gave him his watch. I said, "I don't have a watch, but you take this watch because you're going to lose this watch." He was good about it and let me use his watch. He was a nice guy, Ed Bagwell. He was from South Carolina. But anyway, I got this watch from Ruth on the 16th and the gloves. The sun came out so there was a little bit of a thaw. There was no use trying to keep them clean, so I took mud and rubbed all over the gloves. They were a nice pair of gloves, leather gloves.

The next morning, we were in like Company formation. We were going to attack Gurzenich after we broke out of the pine forest. I told Lieutenant Olson, "Now Berryman is going to be with me, because I know I'm going to get hit today. I'm going to get it and I just know I am, because it's been too long, and Berryman will take over." The other guys had Squads, Reidle had a Squad and Stauffer had a Squad and Berryman was extra. I said to Berryman, "I'm keeping you with me, and if anything happens to me, you take over. You know what to do." He said, "You aren't going to get hit." I said, "Yea, I think I am."

We checked out Gurzenich. It had like a wall about three or four feet high along in front of the houses, the yards and then the street, for that area, kind of a wide street. The houses were very close to the street. I kept getting on my men to get back from in the middle of the street. I wanted them up against this wall, so the shrapnel wouldn't hit them, use the wall for protection. I remember telling them, "Damn it, if you want to get killed, go ahead and get killed. Now get up beside the wall where I told you." About an hour later, we got pinned down. As I went up the street, I went off to the right side of the street around to the back of this house. There was an orchard. There were pear trees back there apparently. I was out there and we were getting shelled. We got pinned down and couldn't advance.

There was a cellar in back of this house with an outside door. A slanted door that went down the steps into a cellar. So, I put all my men down into this cellar and had one of the fellows stand at the opening there and watch and motioned to us

when the shelling let up so we could start attacking again. I had about 15 men with me at this point. Where the other Section was, I had no idea, but I had mine. How I knew what I was doing, I don't know, but anyway, I knew what I was supposed to be doing. Anyway, I was standing out there and a shell came in and knocked me down. I didn't think I got hit. I thought it was just concussion. My right side was numb, but I thought it was just wet dirt, warm dirt running down my leg and down my arm. I didn't give it much thought. I sat back up and when I tried to stand up I couldn't. Ira Poole came running out. He was kind of a hardnosed guy. He wasn't real congenial. But when I got hit, I was probably about 1200 feet from the door of the cellar where I had the men. I was out in the orchard. Poole came running out to get me. He came out after me and just then another shell came in and knocked us both down. He got hit in the elbow. He probably had a more permanent injury than I did. He helped me back to the cellar. My guys were standing up there watching to make sure somebody didn't come attacking. I had Berryman take over. By that time there was about a half dozen of us who had been hit and we were all down in that cellar. And there was a pear bin there. I could reach over with my left arm and reach those pears. Boy, they were good sweet pears. I passed them around to all the guys and we ate pears there until we got word to the medics. The medics could only come up so far with the Jeep and a litter. So, the other guys helped us. Poole could walk but I couldn't walk. I didn't think I was hurt that bad. I was just numb like, no feeling. And that was the end of my fighting. They put us, me and Poole, on this Jeep and took us back down the street to a cave where we had the First Aid Station.

My injuries were to my leg, thigh, and shoulder, just straight up my right side. Later reading in my Regimental History book, it shows where Poole was awarded a Bronze Star medal and I got to thinking, "Well, why, I never knew he had a medal because he got hit when I did. He didn't have any more action. How'd that happen?" It finally came to me that at the Aid Station when they were working on us, I told them that he deserved a medal. He got hit because he came out to get me. Evidently, they took my word for it.

They brought up ambulances that had heaters in them and they took us back to a collection station or something like that where the wounded all came together. They had a tent and they checked you over to see if you were bleeding or anything. Then they sent us back to Aachen, Germany, and there they had a hospital set up. That's the last time I saw Poole. In Aachen we had beds. I thought, boy, we were moving fast. I got hit in the afternoon, or morning actually and they were operating on me already about 9 o'clock at night. I sort of remember it was cold. They had you take your clothes off. They undressed you there in what was like little rooms, kind of like a hospital or something. There were maybe four or five people in a room. It reminded me of a rest home or something. They put a sheet over me and then took me about 100 feet where they had the operating room set up. This sheet was over me and it was cold. The wind was blowing and, boy, my muscles tightened up and it really hurt. There they operated on me. I don't know what they did, but they did something. They just used a local anesthetic. They didn't take the shrapnel out. They probably just cleaned it out and stopped the bleeding.

While I was there and they were working on me, one of the doctors was working on a German prisoner. He was cussing at the German and giving him a hard time. I told him, “Hey, don’t do that. If I was a prisoner in Germany, a German prisoner, I wouldn’t want them treating me like that.”

Anyway, whatever they did, they did, but they didn’t put me out or anything. Then the next night they put us on a hospital train. They ran the hospital train at night because of the black out. There was a train car full and the car was all blacked out. It had curtains on the windows. I remember one fellow who evidently had burns on his face. He had bandages on his face with just holes for his eyes and nose and mouth, holes through like a mask. Evidently, he wanted to smoke, so one of the nurses was letting him hold a cigarette. It was kind of eerie. But, anyway, we went from Aachen, Germany to Liege, Belgium.

Anyway, I got hit the 17th of December 1944, and I didn’t know it then but the Battle of the Bulge, the German breakthrough, had started the day before. Our Section didn’t get hurt on that because we were attacking. But back where we came from in Luxemburg, they were getting overrun because they weren’t expecting anything. We were attacking so we didn’t get caught by surprise. We would have if we had not left there on the 10th, six days earlier.

I remember a fellow from Texas laying there next to me. He had a leg off. He was talking to me and said they told him that he could have an artificial limb and he would be able to get around just as good as anybody. I said, Yea, they have them.” I was trying to console him and build him up. The fellow right next to him on the other side told him, “No, you’re always going to be a cripple.” I could have killed him. I could have busted his mouth. But the poor guy had his leg off and the other guy was giving him a hard time.

The next day buzz bombs were hitting the camp and one of the sides of the tent started to cave in and that made me tense up and made me hurt. One of the bombs hit the kitchen. At least it didn’t hit the tent where I was.

I can’t recall if we went by ambulance from Liege to Paris, or by another train. I just can’t recall. Anyway, we got into Paris in the middle of the night and went down in the basement of a civilian hospital. It was a big hospital. Down there in the basement they fed us split pea soup. We hadn’t had any supper. I hated peas, but that split pea soup really tasted good. It really hit the spot. I thought, “Boy, I’ll like this when I get home.” But when I got home, I didn’t like it.

They took me upstairs in the hospital and they put me on a cot in the hallway. Every so often this nurse would come by and check on me to see if I was still awake. She came by one time and said, “I’m going to give you a shot to put you to sleep.” I told her, “Hey I’m enjoying this. It’s nice and warm in here and I’ve got a bed. Let me enjoy it.” She laughed at me and said, “Okay.” And I did enjoy it. Boy, compared to being out there fighting in the woods and the mud, this was nice.

The next morning, they put us in a room. There were about four or five of us in a room. I was there two or three days. Then a nurse came and told me that they would notify next of kin, which was my wife. I told her, "No, I'll write her a letter. Here it is; she's got a baby about six months old. She doesn't need that for Christmas. She doesn't need that. Just let me write." She said, "No, can't do that." I kept trying to get her sympathy. She finally told me, "Now you promise me you won't die, and I'll just write and turn in a report saying you were slightly wounded." So, I told the nurse, "Okay, I'll do that." That's what she did. Ruth never could understand why I was in the hospital for 2 ½ months if I was only slightly wounded. So, I promised the nurse I wouldn't die. I didn't think I was going to anyway.

We were there for a few days and then they took us out to the airport. There we were on cots. We had beds in the hospital, but these were just cots. That's where I was for Christmas. We had a Christmas meal but there was no salt. People claimed that the French who were doing the cooking took the salt home. I don't know. I also remember a little French fellow, 14, 16 or 17 years old, would shave me every day. And then that is where I heard about Glenn Miller dying. I always thought that Glen Miller died on the day before Christmas, the 24th, 1944. It was just recently that I heard on television on the History Channel that Glen Miller had actually died on December 16th, but they didn't make it public until December 24th. So, I always thought it was Christmas Eve that he got killed.

The day after Christmas they put us inside a cargo plane and flew us to England. At this point if somebody helped me, I could walk. Some of the guys could walk so we helped each other. I couldn't use a crutch because I couldn't use my right arm. But if they supported me by putting an arm around me then I could walk. I didn't use a bedpan. I used the latrine. I was mobile if somebody helped me. They took us to spend a night in a tent and then the next day they took us to the hospital about 18-19 miles outside of London. There was a little town, little village, Brookman Park, and the 5th General Hospital was about a mile from there.

The hospitals were Quonset huts. The roof meets the ground and it's an arch, a half circle. In the back were the officers' and nurses' quarters and the latrines. Where you came in the front of it, I was the third or fourth bunk on my right. I remember that bunk.

There they operated on me the next day. This time they put me out. It was in the morning and I remember having to count backwards and I remember counting. I don't remember how far I counted. It was evening before I woke up. Long about 7 o'clock or something like that, a nurse came around and gave me a glass of tomato juice. Boy, I was starved. I hadn't had anything to eat all day. I conned everybody into giving me their tomato juice and, boy, I got sick. I was sicker than a dog.

There, you weren't allowed to loaf. If somebody couldn't walk, they put you in a wheelchair. I had a good left arm so I could wash windows of the Quonset hut. It was just something to keep you busy.

I finally got so I could be mobile again, probably a week or so after I was operated on. I don't remember anything about New Years. I remember we'd walk over to another place where they would check us and re-bandage the wounds. Finally, I got where I could walk all right, and I would go up to the day room where they had Coke and games. I'd go up there and loaf all day. Most guys didn't, but I wanted to be out and around. There was a Lieutenant who was a patient, too, and he took about 15 of us on a hike in the hospital area. We went about ½ mile over to Brookman Park to a tavern. We could get a Coke and watch them play darts. I enjoyed getting away from the hospital.

Well, let's say between the time I got in the hospital and the time I left England was about ten weeks. I was gone about 2 ½ months. It was ten weeks from December 17th when I got hit until I got back across the Channel. I spent time in one place and another. In London, in the main hospital, the Quonset hut, I got acquainted with a nurse. Her boyfriend was a doctor who was from Canton, Ohio. She was talking about him being from Ohio and she was telling me about him. I told her I worked in Canton. She asked what was it like? And I told her. She said, "I'm going to tell my boyfriend that I met you and you lived in Canton." She treated me nice. She really did, she treated me nice. There was just a connection there.

I don't know how many weeks I was there, but it was for a while. When I was able to be mobile, I'd go into town. The trucks would take us in to Potters Bar. We'd get a pass and go into Potters Bar. It had a theatre. It had a little café and guys playing darts and you'd just drink your Coke and pass the evening visiting. Then sometimes we'd go into London and take a train back to Potters Bar from London. You had to get back to Potters Bar for the Army trucks to take you back to the hospital.

When we were going from London to Remington Spa by train, the guys kept wandering around all through the coaches. The conductor didn't like it. He said soldiers don't go first class in England. He wanted us to stay in third class or whatever it was. I told him, "In the United States soldiers travel first class." He didn't like it but what could he do with 30 guys running around there. Anyway, I got them all herded off the train at Remington Spa and that's when I went to the rehab hospital.

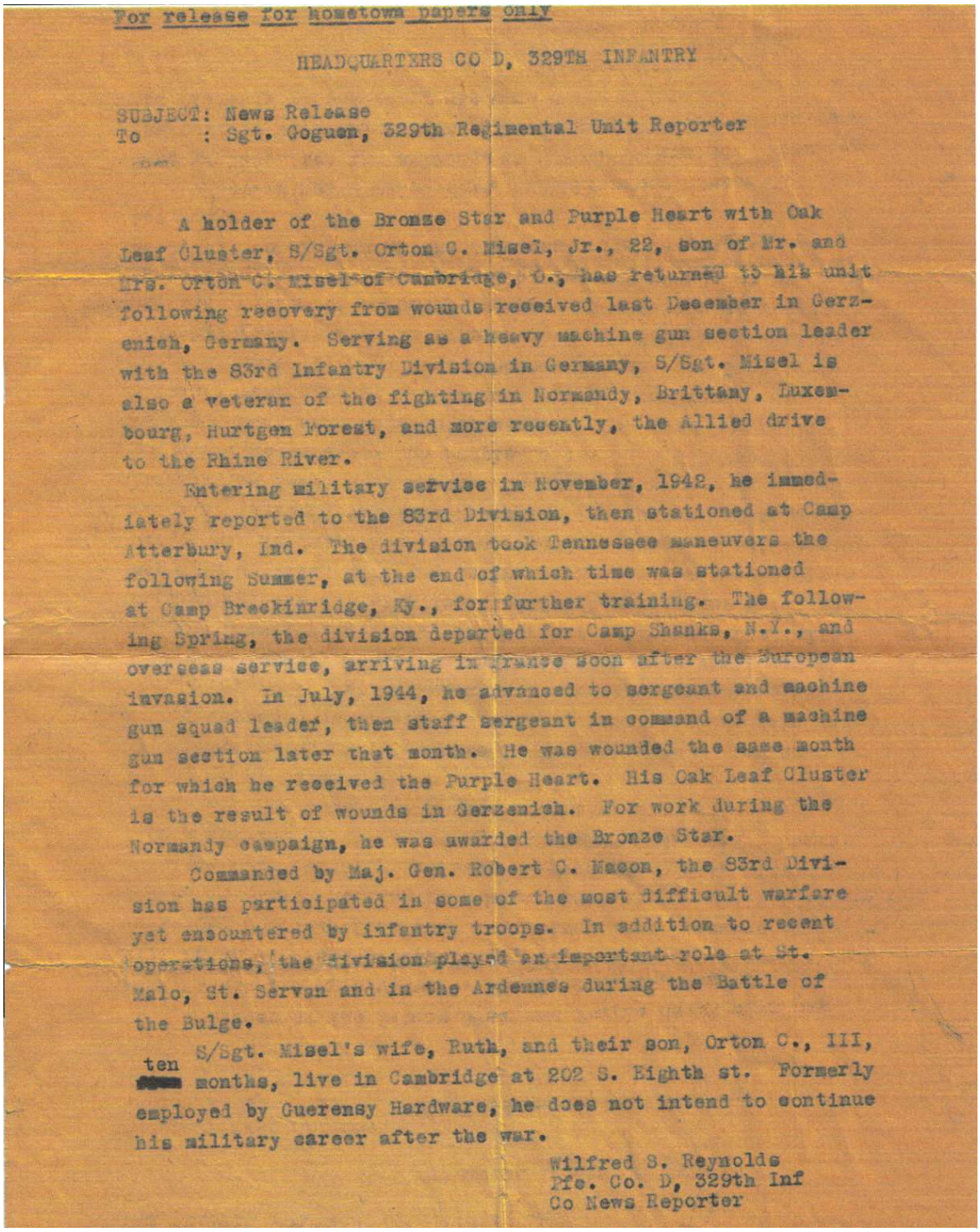
The rehabilitation hospital, I think it was the 307th Rehab Hospital, was just a couple of miles outside of Remington Spa. Remington Spa was like a resort. It was a fair-sized city. It had a theatre and business places. I don't know what to compare it with around here, maybe Caldwell or Byesville, or maybe even bigger. But anyway, you'd go in there at night. You'd get a pass just to put in time. You'd have two or three guys with you, just messing around, not doing anything, just to get away from camp.

In the rehabilitation hospital I started marching, walking to get limbered up so I could go back into combat, back to my unit. While I was there, they sent me to London to make a broadcast. Actually, it was propaganda. They wanted me to make a

broadcast because I had been awarded the Purple Heart with one oak leaf cluster and the Bronze Star medal for heroic achievement. They gave me a three-day pass. I went there and they had a room for me just outside the gates to Hyde Park. Evidently that was some type of government building. So, I went downtown to a sound recording place. I remember this Captain and a woman, a Lieutenant, they went into a glass-enclosed room. They told me what to say. I thought it was pretty corny, glorified. I said I wouldn't do it. They kept asking me, "Well, why did you come here then if you weren't going to do this?" I said, "To get a three-day pass." And I got up and walked out. What are they going to do to me? I told them if my men back in my unit heard me talk like this, they'd think I was crazy. I forget now exactly what they wanted me to say, but they wanted to make you a hero. They wanted to glorify you; how you did all this for your country and all this and I didn't want that.

After I left there, I didn't want to go back to camp so I went back down to Potters Bar. I took a train down there because I was familiar with it. It had only been two or three weeks since I'd been there. I thought I'd just go down and get a room and then go back to London later. So, I went to this café and asked the guy that owned it if he knew someone who rented rooms where I could stay overnight. He gave me directions to a house and told me, "If you can't, you come back here." That was about 6:30, maybe 6:00 in the evening. So, I went up to the house he told me about and they told me that they didn't have any empty rooms. So, I went back and told the owner of the bar. There was a theatre right across the street from his café. I don't know what time he closed up. It was probably about 7:00 when I was there or a little later. But anyway, he said, "You go over to the show and you come back over here after the show and then tonight when I close up, I'll go sleep at my sister's house tonight and you go up in my room." So, I went to the show and then back over to the café when he was about to close up. He said, "Now in the morning I'll rap on the door and you come down and let me in." Here's a stranger in England and this fellow was this kind. I couldn't believe how nice he was. The next day I went back to London and when the three-day pass was up, I went back to Remington Spa to camp.

There, they graded you every Tuesday. They'd go over you and they'd rate you. You'd go from 1 to 2 or whatever grade it was up. Then you could leave and go back to your unit. I told the doctor I wanted to go back. I didn't want to go through all these grades. I wanted to go back to my unit, assuming I was going to get there. Luckily, I did, but it wasn't necessarily so. Some guys didn't get back to their original unit. But, anyway, he wouldn't let me. Finally, I told him I wanted to go, and he told me, "Sergeant, you've seen enough combat. You just come back here in England and I'll keep you here. You don't have to go back." I told him, "No, I want to go back to my outfit." So, he told me, "Now next week, I won't let you go unless you ask me. I'm not going to let you go. But if you ask me and you still haven't changed your mind, then I'll let you go, but you don't have to." I said, "Yeah, I still want to go." So, the next Tuesday, I told him, "I want to go." He said, "Okay, I'll let you go." I was there for a couple of weeks or so. I can't really break down the time without giving it a lot of thought.



For release for hometown papers only

HEADQUARTERS CO D, 329TH INFANTRY

SUBJECT: News Release
To : Sgt. Goguen, 329th Regimental Unit Reporter

A holder of the Bronze Star and Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, S/Sgt. Orton C. Misel, Jr., 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Orton C. Misel of Cambridge, O., has returned to his unit following recovery from wounds received last December in Gerzenich, Germany. Serving as a heavy machine gun section leader with the 83rd Infantry Division in Germany, S/Sgt. Misel is also a veteran of the fighting in Normandy, Brittany, Luxembourg, Hurtgen Forest, and more recently, the Allied drive to the Rhine River.

Entering military service in November, 1942, he immediately reported to the 83rd Division, then stationed at Camp Atterbury, Ind. The division took Tennessee maneuvers the following Summer, at the end of which time was stationed at Camp Breckinridge, Ky., for further training. The following Spring, the division departed for Camp Shanks, N.Y., and overseas service, arriving in France soon after the European invasion. In July, 1944, he advanced to sergeant and machine gun squad leader, then staff sergeant in command of a machine gun section later that month. He was wounded the same month for which he received the Purple Heart. His Oak Leaf Cluster is the result of wounds in Gerzenich. For work during the Normandy campaign, he was awarded the Bronze Star.

Commanded by Maj. Gen. Robert C. Macon, the 83rd Division has participated in some of the most difficult warfare yet encountered by infantry troops. In addition to recent operations, the division played an important role at St. Malo, St. Servan and in the Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge.

S/Sgt. Misel's wife, Ruth, and their son, Orton C., III, ten [redacted] months, live in Cambridge at 202 S. Eighth st. Formerly employed by Guernsey Hardware, he does not intend to continue his military career after the war.

Wilfred S. Reynolds
Pfc. Co. D, 329th Inf
Co News Reporter

News release of my return to action

Then I went to Litchfield and that's where you were prepared to go back across the Channel. That was strictly a deployment place where they gave you your helmet and that type of stuff before you went back to your combat unit. That's where I got a

rifle and had to zero it in, set the sights. That had to be done before we could get our passes. We were there about 4 or 5 days. They gave us a weekend pass to anywhere in England. No place was off limits. Soldiers normally weren't allowed in Coventry. It was about destroyed by bombs. Germans bombed it. A couple of guys that I knew from Remington Spa and I went to Coventry to see what had happened there. The MPs stopped us, and we showed them our passes. We could go anywhere in England when we were getting ready to cross the Channel again. Coventry was blown up. It was terrible in there. But there was like a pub, or a restaurant, like a café that we went to. The town was still operating but it was really torn up. A guy in the restaurant told us where we could go and get a room for the night. So, the three of us went and stayed in a house in Coventry that night. Then the next day we had to go back to Litchfield.

We left Litchfield the next day and went across the Channel to Le Havre, France. There was a dock there. The ship could dock there. That would have been about February 25 or 26, 1945. We stayed there for a couple of days. We were in tents. While still on the boat, I noticed one of the guys had overshoes. It was February and he had overshoes on. I said, "Where did you get those?" He said, "Why, didn't you get any?" I said, "No." I hadn't had any since being in the hospital. He said he got them in Boston. I said, "Boston?" He said, "Yeah, where are you coming from?" I told him, "I'm coming back from the hospital." He wanted to know, since I'd been wounded, what combat was like. To him I was an old soldier, which I was.

We were over on a hill. They called it Givet. We stayed there for a couple of nights and we stayed in tents. They had a theatre that we could go to. I remember coming out of the show. There was a big guy that I knew in front of me. I went up and grabbed a hold of him and jerked him back. He turned around and it wasn't the fellow I thought it was. I'd never seen him before. He could have eaten me up. I said, "I'm sorry, I thought you were somebody else." He just laughed about it.

While here, we didn't have any lights, so I took like a milk can and I poked a hole in it and put a sock down in it. I went to get kerosene so we could have a light in our tent because it got dark there early in February. I went to the supply tent and told the guy I wanted some kerosene. He asked me what kind of a light I had. I said, It's so high, it's round, just a regular lamp." He said, "Okay, you can have it," and he pulled down a can of kerosene. He said, "Some of these guys took a tin can and put a sock down in it and you can't have it for that, or it'll burn something up." I guess I did it right 'cause we did not start a fire.

The next day we headed back closer to on line. We stayed in a house that night. About two days later, we went to another house and stayed. We kept moving up closer to on line. This would be about February 27, 1945. There were several of us in this one unit in a little town. We were upstairs in a big barracks-like wooden building. While I was there, I met a guy by the name of Meisel (pronounced like Misel) from Chicago. The Lieutenant came through reading off names of those ready to go back to their company. He came to Meisel. Well, this guy was in the latrine, the toilet. He wasn't there. So, I answered for him, thinking he was calling my name. There were about 30 of us getting on the trucks. As you were lined up to

get onto the trucks, they called off your name and you answered with your serial number. I didn't give the right serial number. I said, "Well, that's all right, I'll just go ahead. I'll go." He said, "Would you? Will you go ahead and go?" I said, 'Yeah, I'll go ahead and go." He said, "Good, I'll just change this."

It wasn't dark yet. I got back and I don't know how but somehow, I got back to my Company. They were out in pup tents. They weren't in houses. They were ready to attack the next morning. This was February 28, 1945. So, I was back. In the meantime, Berryman was promoted to Platoon Sergeant and I had given him my binoculars. I told him when I got hit that I wanted him to keep them if I didn't come back and for him to take them home with him. But if I came back, I wanted them back. He told me that the binoculars were up in the kitchen and to go get them. So, I did, and I still have them. He told me where my Section was. I think one of the Sergeants, Sergeant Nevius was hoping to become a Staff Sergeant. He wasn't too happy about me coming back, I'm sure. I had another Sergeant by the name of Rittger. He was of German descent and we always called him Von Rittger.

Photo, Rittger

Anyway, I was back. The first time I had the First Section and this time I had the Second Section. Reidle had the First Section after I left and after Berryman became Platoon Sergeant. The nice part about it was that Berryman took good care of me because he knew I put him where he was. If it hadn't been for me, he wouldn't have been Tech Sergeant. So, he took good care of me. He even ate my mixed nuts, a story that I'll tell later.

They told me the next morning that we were going to attack. So that's what we did. There were a lot of new people because they had a lot of casualties during the Battle of the Bulge. The next morning, we attacked. We were heading toward Neuss, a good-sized big city. The Germans started firing anti-aircraft guns, shooting down level like a rifle. You could see tracers, red bullets, coming into the beet fields, like cornfields. There were rows of beets and the tracers would come bouncing at you. I thought, "Boy, I could have been back at the hospital if I'd wanted to."

There was a little railroad, just a little station, in this little town. There I found a watch. I've still got it, a pocket watch. I haven't got it running now but it's in the living room. It ran a good while. I carried that until I got home.

That night, we finally captured the edge of Neuss and then we were in houses. The next day, we went on downtown in Neuss and Neuss surrendered. In fact, I got a pair of nail clippers, toenail clippers that I still have. I picked them up. I don't know what kind of a building they were in, store of some kind. I just saw them lying there and picked them up.

The next day, we were going to try to go into Duesseldorf, that's across the Rhine River. That's what our objective was. We went across a canal, into kind of a suburb. That night, "Boom!" the Germans blew the bridge. I thought, "Boy, that's good." If we had gotten any further, we would have been on it.

From then on, I was separated from everybody else. I had my own Section. I just stayed with one Squad and the other Squad had Sergeant Nevius; he was one of my original men. I stayed with Rittger's Squad.

There, in the suburb, I found in a garage an Opal automobile. It was like a Pontiac from back in the 1930s. I went around and found some wheels with air in them and took them off and put them on the Opal, so I had wheels with air in all four tires. I then went around to all of the garages there to find gasoline. When I found something that might be gasoline I would take and pour it on the road or ground and light a match to see if it would burn. If it would I'd put it in the gas tank. I drove that car around there. In this part of the area the civilians were gone. There was fighting in this part. So, I didn't see any civilians. Anyway, I found some green paint, so I put USA on the doors of the car. I thought maybe I'll keep this until the end of the war. I parked it right beside of my machine gun. I came out there after dark and it glowed like a Christmas tree. That was fluorescent paint. I took blankets and covered it up. Then the next day, I took it out of there and put it back in the garage. I don't think I ever used it again.

One of my men had been to cook and baker's school, K.D. Austin, so he made pies for us. There was fruit there in the cellar. We stayed there for a while in a defensive position.

We then went back to Holland for some more training, river crossing training. It was near the end of March, we went to Maastricht, Holland. It was a large city in Holland. We went back there and trained for river crossing, using rowboats. Assault boats they called them. I remember they mainly used smoke. Boy, you could hardly get your breath. I thought, "Boy, I wouldn't want to have to do this." I didn't know how valuable it was going to be later. We had never had river-crossing training.

We left there on March 29, 1945. We crossed the Rhine River going east into Germany. We crossed there and from then on, we were just hit and run. We'd attack a town and then be out of there. The soldiers would leave and somebody else would come along behind us and mop up.

These towns were in Germany and there were civilians there. They hadn't evacuated or anything. They didn't give us any problems or resistance. They treated

us okay, especially the kids and the older people. You really felt sorry for the kids because they didn't have anything to do with putting Hitler in power. I made sure we didn't mistreat any of them. It's just second nature that you didn't mistreat older, helpless people or young kids. They had Hitler Youth, but only once did I bump into them. Normally, they were innocent kids. I think some of them were glad we were there.

On April 3, 1945 we attacked Neuhaus and captured it. Then we first went across at night, I think it was, the Weser River. I'm not sure because we crossed several rivers about this time. The Weser maybe was later. We were going through there on a little dirt road through the woods after we had crossed the river. On the back of our vehicles we had lights called "cat eyes". The Germans couldn't see them, but we could. They were actual lights. But most of the Jeeps had trailers behind them with equipment and ammunition. The cat eyes were out on the Jeep in front of us. You had to keep gunning it to get the Jeep through the mud and then bang, we'd hit this trailer. We'd just go about 20 feet and stop. We just kept hitting that trailer. The Jeeps had angle iron (about four-foot-high bars with a little angle on them with a notch in them) because the Germans were putting a wire across the road that would catch you at head level. So, all the Jeeps had angle iron on them so they would cut the wire and it wouldn't come back and hit the driver. So, when we hit the trailer in front of us, we didn't do any damage to the Jeep.

I can remember that night. It poured down rain, so we took our raincoats, what we called ponchos, and we wrapped them around our Jeep. We had a machine gun mount on the dash of our Jeep, so we took the machine gun down. We laid it down on the floor and then we put the windshield up. Then we put the top up and then put our coats around the Jeep. We were cozy in there with the ponchos to keep the rain out. We weren't actually attacking there. We were on the move every night.

Photo, Drive to the Elbe – Wynn, Rittger, Berryman, and Broughton

Somewhere around this time but I can't remember where, one of my men, I don't want to say he stole a Jeep, he borrowed a Jeep. I didn't ask him where he got it. From then on, I had a private Jeep. I let him drive it since he got it. I don't remember his name. We took mud and smeared it on the bumpers because the bumpers had the units painted on them, 83rd Division whatever, on the front and rear bumpers. So, we kept mud on the bumpers. When the war ended, I still had that Jeep. It was a help because when we were going across Germany, we needed everything we could get to ride in. Usually it was run, run, run. We needed all the vehicles we could get, German civilian cars or anything. We were going so fast. Without this extra Jeep my Section would have had only two Jeeps. Now we had three Jeeps. So, I put all my men in Jeeps. Some of the troops would ride on trucks. They would have

to jump off the truck and fight and then jump back on the truck. But by having three Jeeps, I had it made. I could put five men in each Jeep: two or three in the back and then me and the driver. We barreled down through there. We never got caught. Nobody questioned it. They were just happy we had transportation. But anyway, we were going through there on April 3rd. We were in Neuhaus. A war correspondent nicknamed us, the 83rd Division, "The Rag Tag Circus". He said we had buses, everything and anything that would run, we had in that convoy going across Germany. We'd hit a town and at night we usually stopped on a hillside or something. Then one night we stopped in a town where we had a house. There was a schoolteacher in the house where my men had gone in. She had heard that any cameras had to be turned in to us, which I didn't know. So, she wanted to give me her camera. She spoke good English. She gave it to me, so I took it. She said, "Do you need my name, so I'll get it back?" I said, "Yeah." So, I took her name. At that time, that was the least of my worries. She didn't get it back because I had it run over it with a Jeep. After the war ended, one of my men took the film and tried to develop it. He got some stuff to process film at a camera shop. He told me the pictures weren't any good. I didn't want to give it to somebody else, so I just ran over it with a Jeep. A couple days later he told me, "Yea, it worked. We just did it wrong." I ended up with another German camera that I still have.

We kept on the run and on April 10th we were in Goslar where we got pinned down. That's the last time that Lentz and I were together. We got held up there, firing and fighting. He was in the Second Platoon. This time we were going as a Company rather than Sections. Our other Section, I don't know where it was but anyway, somewhere in the convoy. So, that time we were together there for an hour or so and that's the last time that we ever got together before he got killed.

We were under fire on the hillside and so I jumped out of my Jeep with some of my men. It was in a city. We were fired on from over to my right. There were houses along there. A tank or artillery or something was firing at us. So, I ran around behind this house, jumped across this ditch where they had been laying a water line or something. We had to cross this ditch to get behind the house to see where the firing was coming from. Then they stopped firing. But when I came back, this German, how I knew it I don't know, but an SS Major was lying in this ditch. He was hiding. He was dressed real fancy. There was a motorcycle lying close by there I saw later. I figured he was smart and could understand surrender. I told him to surrender but he wouldn't. The first thing that happened, I went to draw my pistol and I didn't have it. Riding in the Jeep it kind of rubbed the inside of my hip on the Jeep. I had a blanket or something lying there between the two seats in front, so I had it there. So, I didn't have my weapon. So, I told one of my guys to shoot at his feet. "Click", he always carried his gun on an empty chamber. So, one of the other guys fired a carbine or a rifle to his feet. I think he had a carbine. The Officer was lying on his back with his arms folded, one hand under the other arm. When we fired at his feet, he unfolded his arms and he had a pistol in his hand and he shot straight up. So, I told my man, "Shoot him." Lentz was there and we talked. We couldn't leave the officer there and he wouldn't surrender. Had he not been an SS Officer we maybe would have tried a little harder to get him to surrender. The German SS were the elite Germans.

One of my men got really mad because when the Officer was shot the bullet hit his binoculars. He wanted those.

On the 12th, I think, we captured Barby, seemed like it was in the evening. We pulled back because we were trying to cross the Elbe on a railroad bridge. I remember we slept up on a little hillside like. The next morning, April 13th, Friday the 13th, we came back into Barby and the Germans had blown the bridge. They blew it before we captured the town, blew the bridge so we couldn't get across. They'd already blown the highway bridge on the highway that we were following. We'd hit a town, capture it, and go on. Somebody else came along and cleaned up and took the prisoners. We didn't take any prisoners. We just disarmed them and got somebody else to take them. We didn't worry about it. There were people coming along behind us and we were in front.

On the 13th the bridge had been blown so Colonel Crabill, Regimental Commander, called for boats, assault boats like we used back in Holland. They were big enough, I think, to hold 15, my whole Section. Two squads were in this one boat, I'm pretty sure. On page 107 of The 329th Regimental History there is a picture of someone getting ready to cross and I think it is me because not many men had a carbine and I did. Anyway, April 13th, Friday the 13th at 13 hundred and 30 o'clock that's when Colonel Crabill, our Commander said, "Don't wait to be organized, just take off. When you get to the other side of the river, go." And that's exactly what I did. They laid down smoke screen for us. At the same time we were doing this, up at Magdeburg the 2nd Armor Division was getting ready to cross. We were running to their right. Anyway, they laid down smoke screen so we could cross under cover. I had Boat #33. I took my men and equipment into the boat and we crossed. We just rowed with oars. The river wasn't as big as the Ohio River, but it was good-sized for that area. When you read about it, it says that it was a wide and swift river, but I don't remember it being like that. It didn't take very long to get across.

Once across we went across a field because to my left was a highway where the bridge was blown. We went on that highway about a ¼ of a mile from the river to Walterneinberg. I took my men to the north side of Walterneinberg, which would be going east because the Germans were up in Magdeburg. We went to the last street in town and that's where I set up my machine guns. There weren't any civilians where we were. I don't know if there were any downtown or not but there weren't any on the north side.

After we crossed the Elbe and captured Walterneinberg, the engineers came in and built bridges, pontoon bridges. They built two of them and they named one of the bridges the Truman Bridge and we didn't know who Truman was. I thought, "What General is that?" We didn't know he was the President. We didn't know that Roosevelt had died. On Friday, the 13th when the engineers were building the bridges at night, the German planes strafed them. Bill Horner from Cambridge was killed there, which I didn't know until later. After I got home, in fact, I was living on

Madison Avenue when his mother came to see me and wanted to talk to me about what kind of place it was where he got killed.

While I was in Walterneinberg I had, for the first time ever, an Artillery Forward Observer with me, a 1st Lieutenant. I don't know where he came from because all at once he was there. He went with me. I had my men and machine guns in the houses. The house where I set up the observation had an upstairs that was like a half story above and it had a skylight window you could open up in the roof. I found a box there somewhere and I stood on that box. I could look out the skylight and I looked off to the north, which would be to my left when you came up the river. When I looked out the window the road was straight ahead of me for about ½ mile. The highway was like an asphalt road, two-lane road and it kind of curved like from the west to the east at the north end of the town. The road was higher than the rest of the ground. It was built up. That road came down which would be north and had a big curve and then came south. When I looked out, I could see over this bank and here there were about eight or ten tanks, German tanks, sitting down there behind the bank of the road. You couldn't see them from the ground. So, when I'm watching they were coming up onto the road. They had like a dirt ramp to come up onto the highway. I told the Lieutenant, Artillery Forward Observer Lieutenant, that they're coming up the road. They came up onto the highway and they came west which would be towards the river. They came down there and then made a left turn running parallel with the river. Then, of course, they headed south. The tanks were then within a quarter mile of where I was because Walterneinberg was only a quarter of a mile from the river. They were between me and the river. They came rolling down through there, eight or ten German tanks. One of my Machine Gunners was to the left of me and a couple or three houses up the street. He opened up on the tank with his machine gun. As soon as he opened up the tank goes, "Boom!" The tank fired back. I didn't know who had fired at the tank.

I told the Artillery Officer where the tanks were and asked him to come to direct fire.

Photo, June 1945 in southern Germany, Wells and K D Austin

Because of the trees you could see the tanks, but you couldn't see where the shells were landing. So, he told me, "Sergeant, now you know how to direct fire. You're a Machine Gun Section Leader. You know how to direct fire. So, you tell me where you want me to fire and I'll take care of it." And he did. We started blasting those tanks with artillery and pretty soon they turned around and went back. We didn't see any more of those tanks.

One of my men was a kid by the name of K. D. Austin. I always called him the kid. He was single and I was married. He was younger than me. But anyway, after this situation with the tanks was over he told me, he said, “Sergeant, just as soon as I put my finger on that trigger, I could hear you say, ‘Don’t ever fire on a tank.’ So, I grabbed that gun and run around behind the house.” It’s a good thing he did. Nobody got hurt.

We spent the night there and the next day. I just stayed in place, and the other Battalions, probably, went into other parts of town. I never went much further into town then from where I was.

On the 15th we expanded the bridgehead and captured Nutha. That was just a small village. That was actually the last battle we really had. That’s where Lentz got killed. He was on our right with the Second Platoon. We were in a woods. Lieutenant Olson, the Platoon Leader, he yelled up at me and I went back. He told me that Sergeant Lentz just got killed. And he said, “You’re going to be the next one killed,” because I was standing out there and everybody else was in the foxholes. I wanted to know what was going on. I was a leader and I led. I never told my men, “Now, you guys go here but rather you guys follow me.” I was in front. We stayed there until about, I think, April 22, 1945. I’d say, a mile or so east of Nutha on a paved road. That’s where I got together with Kenny Maier.

I was always out somewhere it seemed like. Well, my Section was up about a mile from Nutha, north of it. We got some barn doors and made a shelter down in the gully between the road and a bank there. That’s where I had my gun sitting to protect us from Germans that were out in a field up ahead of us. I would go back and see Kenny at Company Headquarters. It seemed like everybody was at Company Headquarters but me. I was never around Company Headquarters. I had no idea where they even were most of the time. Don’t know if that’s because they didn’t like me or did like me and trusted me. I don’t know. But anyways, most of the time my Section was on its own.

While we were there my men started chasing a chicken in a barnyard. This was in Nutha. This was a small town something like Kimbolton. They had animals and there was a chicken. We wanted to kill the chicken to eat it. We were chasing the chicken in the backyard of this house and this old lady came out. She was pretty old, I think. At least she looked old to me when I was 22 years old. Anyway, she started yelling “ei!, ei!” In German that was eggs. She meant that was her food, her eggs. We quit. We didn’t kill her chicken. To this very day, I would have felt guilty if I had killed that chicken. Hope somebody else didn’t kill it.

While in Nutha I was out with my men out away from town. I came in one day and went to Company Headquarters as Kenny and his men were there. So, I went to see Kenny. While I was in Headquarters this little guy, a Company runner, was waving a 45 pistol around. Kenny took it away from him. Kenny pulled the slide back and looked in to see if there was a shell in the chamber. There wasn’t. The slide went back forward and Kenny pointed the gun up and pulled the trigger.

Boom! When he had pulled the slide back and then slid it back forward that put a shell in the chamber. We went upstairs to see if anyone got hurt but no one was up there.

Also, while at Company Headquarters in Nutha, I had my German binoculars with me. A Lieutenant came up to me and asked to see the binoculars. He asked me my name. I said, Misel." He said, "Okay, they're yours." I had scratched my name on them with my penknife. He asked me if I had a case for them and I told him, "No." He said, "Well, I've got one I'll give to you." He went somewhere and came back with my binoculars and a case. I guess he thought if I'd stolen them from someone else, he wasn't going to give me the case. So, we were there 'til, I'm not sure, about April 22nd probably.

Then we went on to Zerbts, but the Regimental History doesn't say we went there. It says another Battalion went there but we went there. I thought it was A Company because Chauncey Adelman was Captain. I think he was a schoolteacher in the States. But, anyway, I remember him being there when we were with the Rifle Company. I think it was A Company, pretty sure. The Company, the rest of them were still back at this other town of Nutha. I don't know how far apart we were but, anyway, I stayed there until the war ended.

I set up my Headquarters on the west edge of this town. There was a field down behind the town. The house I was in was on the north side of the street. I would go out the back door and go down across the bottom there probably about a quarter of a mile or so and I had my guns set up along a little stream. I could watch from the field and fire if necessary. I had one Squad out there. One Squad would stay out there overnight and then the next night the other Squad would go out. So, every other night they got to stay in the house. This was all defensive at this point. For all we knew the fighting was over, but we still had to stand guard to make sure, just to defend.

There were civilians there. I didn't go see them. They'd come to see me. The first part of May 1945 some of my men had picked up an old motorcycle. I'd been out checking my gun positions and came back on the motorcycle. It had been raining. We had some horseshoe pegs. I don't remember having any horseshoes, but we must have. Anyway, I forgot about those pegs. There was dirt between the street and the sidewalk. I was rolling in there and a whole gang of civilians was waiting on me. I came rolling up there, probably showing off, and I forgot about those horseshoe pegs. I hit them and wrecked the motorcycle. I went in the house there and a medic patched me up a little bit and I came back out and the people wanted me to take them back across the Elbe River. But I couldn't take anybody anywhere. They were afraid of the Russians. We were in the Russian zone then. The dividing line between the American and the Russian area was the Elbe River. That was the reason they stopped us when they did because we were actually going to have to give up that territory. I don't know if the people were able to get across or not. I didn't nose around to find out because we had MPs and such on the other side of the river. It depended on how generous the MPs were as to whether they would allow anyone to cross.

They sent Jeeps up to me on May 4th or it could have been the next day, May 5th. It probably was May 5th. But anyway, we loaded up and that's when we left to cross the Elbe. We went back across the Elbe on the Truman Bridge, a pontoon bridge. That's the only way traffic could go then.

We went back towards the west 10 or 15 miles roughly. The name of the town was Ilsenborg, I think. There was a railroad there because we slept in boxcars. It was nice weather. There was a German military hospital there. I remember that we were out there in open ground. We were just putting in time. I remember seeing these German soldiers, wounded soldiers, walking around there at the edge of this hospital. We were there for maybe a couple of days.

We went back to Rupps on May 9th. That was near Brunsehig, which was a big city. When we got in there, it wasn't quite dark. I got a picture of this town a couple of days later and on the back of the picture it tells the name of the town. I sent the picture to Ruth. That's how I finally found out the name of the town we were in. We didn't know it before that. But, anyway, when we got to this little town outside of Brunsehig, it wasn't quite dark yet. It was getting late in the evening and the Company Commander, Captain Settler, flagged down my Jeep and told me he wanted me to go back about 50 miles and get the kitchen and bring it up to where Company Headquarters was going to be in Rupps. Why he picked me, I don't know but he did. He told me this is a list of towns we had come through, from Ilsenborg to where we were right now. He said, "Now I don't know if I spelled them right or not, but that's the way they sounded to me. So just follow it backwards." So that's what I did, I wrote them down backwards, back where we started from.

Photo, May 1945 Rupps Germany – Me and my shiny cowboy boot tops, Percy Wooten, Walter Pula and Tom Burdiss

We had started out at Ilsenborg and then went to Scapleburg, Schawen, and this is the way Captain Settler had them spelled, Ascerewick, Hornburg, Borsum, Borcummuer, Kissenbuck, Holchter, Wolpbroth, Thude, Gratelde, Broshthen, Timmerlah and that was the last town we came to 'til we were at Rupps. It was starting to get dark by then. There was a ferry that we used to cross the river just before we got to Rupps. The ferry had stopped. They had quit for the night. So there I am and this was basically like going to Columbus and instead of using the interstate,(the Germans had an Autobahn, the same thing as an interstate), so

instead of going the interstate, we'd just go on old Rt. 40, going back and forth across the interstate. So, there we were trying to get back across the river and the ferry wasn't running. So, we went back to Brunsehig. Here we were in a German big city and we didn't speak German. Somehow we found an MP station, American Military. He told me, "Just forget about all the towns. Just go out here, get on the Autobahn and you go down to where you'll find this exit to Ilsenborg and you're there. Don't fool with going back and forth." The Autobahn was a superhighway Hitler had built for the military. Eisenhower then got the idea for the Interstates so airplanes could land and take off on them if we were ever invaded. Anyway, that was what we did. We got back there and got the kitchen. It was duck soup then, because we went right back on the Autobahn and got in there in the middle of the night. I can't remember where I slept, probably in a house there where I had a picture of me that I sent to Ruth and told about my shiny boots.

Then the 1st Platoon went over to another town for a while, 3-4 days or so. We had houses to stay in. I never saw civilians in this town. We stayed there until about the 18th of May. We then went back to Rupps then to Bavaria, that's a province. I didn't know then, but that goes down into where General Patton led the charge of Bavaria Province. We were in Dutdenstedt and we stayed there just putting in time. We were in an old hotel there. They had an inside toilet which was on the 2nd or 3rd floor. It worked by gravity but at least we had a toilet.

We were in Company formation there. We weren't doing anything. There were just 100 to 120 people, that's one Company. I don't know where the rest of the Battalion was. So, there I was with my men. They were in the houses too, but they were a quarter of a block to a half a block away from where I was.

Photo, June 1945 the Danube River-Me, Playa and Wells

We didn't have any casualties after the 15th of April. The 1st Platoon didn't have any, but the Riflemen and the 2nd Platoon got hit. The 2nd Platoon was on my right flank in the woods and a sniper got them. That's where Lentz was killed.

But then we got there in Dutdenstedt and we stayed in that area until August 1945. We moved about a quarter of a mile or so, maybe a mile from Dutdenstedt on the 4th of July and went to where they had a bunch of Army barracks and we stayed there. We were close to the Danube River. We went down the Danube on a boat to Passa, Germany. That's where the largest pipe organ in the world was. In that town they had shows, USO or something like that. Kenny Maier was with me all this time.

Photo, May 1945, Dutdenstedt

Photo, May 1945 in Germany – me and Kenny Maier

Photo, May 1945 Kenny Maier, Dutdenstedt Germanv

Photo, June 1945 Passa Germany – Me near the church that had the world's largest pipe organ

Photo, June 1945 Passa Germany – Church near the Danube River with the largest pipe organ in the world

On about July 4th, I had gotten a package from Ruth. At the time we were in a hurry because we were getting ready to move to this other little place. I had the package and it had a big box of cocoa in it, Hershey's Cocoa. I thought, "Well, I don't want that." I am trying to carry everything, and Berryman, he was a Tech Sergeant, he and I were together then, and so I just gave it to him. So, he took the chocolate.

Photo, May 1945, me, near the Danube River

In August, I'm not sure of the exact date, we transferred to the 99th Division. We went to either Armstein or Armstedt, Germany and I'm not sure. I don't know. But we transferred there as the high point people. The whole Division didn't go, just the high point people. 90 points was high point and that meant you were headed to the States. Points were based on battle stars and I had four of them, not the Bronze Star but battle areas. I had four, Normandy, Central Europe, Rhineland and one other which I can't think of at this time, but they are listed on my discharge papers. It counted so many points for the battle stars and then I had a child. That counted as so many points. Then your medals, like the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Cluster, they all counted as points. The Purple Heart Cluster meant that I had been awarded the Purple Heart twice. The guy running for President said he had four Purple Hearts but there isn't such a thing. There would be one Purple Heart and three clusters. I guess it sounded good. We just sat there until ready to come home. We had a Lieutenant and a Captain. We were about the size of a Company. We'd run and take guard duty at night. Everybody there was from Buck Sergeant up. There weren't any Privates in this group. It was nice weather. It was a town something like Kimbolton. Kenny and I were together. Here we got to eat two meals a day. In the morning we'd have revelry. We didn't have retreat at night. We had revelry in the morning and then we'd eat chow. Then along in the afternoon, actually, in the middle of the afternoon we had the other meal. So, I was served two meals a day.

We were in the houses here. In fact, there was water in the house where I was. We had a bathtub so we could take a bath. There were four of us in this house, me, Kenny and Berryman and somebody else. Berryman was the one that had the chocolate. Here there was a chow line and there were these kids. The kids, 8, 10, 12 years old, or younger getting garbage out of the garbage cans. When you came out after eating your chow there were garbage cans where you dumped your foods. These kids were digging in the garbage for food. So, we all got together because everybody was congenial to each other. When you'd go through the chow line, they'd give you all you wanted. We had them load up our mess kits. Then we wouldn't put it in the garbage but, instead, we would take it to these kids. Boy, I expect their parents were happy seeing them fed. We liked kids. They were nice kids. There was a little girl about 9, 10 years old probably. I paid her to dust our room. We enjoyed being able to help the German kids. They were friendly.

About the chocolate I gave Berryman, he came up to me later and thanked me for the nuts. I didn't know what he was talking about. He said the Cocoa tin had mixed

nuts in it. I liked mixed nuts! Had I known it was mixed nuts I would have kept them. But anyway, Berryman enjoyed them.

There was a barbershop there. I went every morning and for a dime in our money, I got a shave instead of shaving myself.

They had horseshoe pegs out in a field at the edge of the town. Kenny and I, just to put in time, we'd go out and just pitch horseshoes all day. This would be August 1945, so it was warm weather. The Captain and the Lieutenant thought, "Boy this is great. Boy these guys aren't just running around; they're out there exercising." We were bored. But all the time we pitched horseshoes; I never beat Kenny. We'd pitch all day, but I could never beat him.

The Captain and Lieutenant, they would pitch horseshoes against us. They teamed up. We'd pitch day on end and they never could beat Kenny and me. Kenny would get cold and I'd get hot and when I'd get cold and he'd get hot. They never beat us. Boy, they'd get disgusted. They never got upset with us, but they got disgusted with themselves, but they never beat us. We pitched for hours on end and we just got good at pitching horseshoes. Nobody else wanted to pitch with them.

While we were there, we went out in a field in square tents, big preamble tents they called them. There'd be about 10 or so men in each tent. We were getting ready to go to Marseille, France. Before we left for Marseille, we had to stand inspection for Patton, General Patton. We weren't very happy about it. We were in like a park. They had like a stage and it had seats, I think. I can't remember if we sat down or just had to stand up. Probably had to stand up. We stood for inspection before we left. He got up there and said a few words to us and he told us, "Now, when you fellows go home, remember this: your country doesn't owe you a damn thing. It's your privilege, not your duty, but your privilege to fight for your country. When you go home, you forget about this." Then he inspected us. I still remember looking into his eyes. He had pale, kind of drunk-looked eyes. He wasn't, but that was just my impression when I was standing there, and he was inspecting me. He said a couple words to each of us. After the war ended, they made the movie, "Patton". Kenny and I were talking, and Kenny said, "You remember how we hated that day we had to stand inspection for Patton. Now it makes you feel pretty good."

We went from there to Marseille, France and then we would be shipped out to the States from there. We were in tents. They had USO shows or something, just small talent, not any big names.

While there, they wanted some of us to volunteer to run the Jeeps down to the beach, so I volunteered. You had to go down a long slope to get to where the beach was, where we had our tents. It was just like a campground. Going down this road we were all driving fast. Going down the grade we were driving in sand. Somebody in front would stop. There were probably at least 30 Jeeps. When we finally got down there everybody had their radiators leaking. They were hitting each other as we went down the slope 'cause no one could get stopped quickly enough.

Photo, 1945,Kenny Maier on board ship coming home

The first one would hit and boy, everybody else just went boom, boom, boom. When we got down there, I asked, "What are we going to do with them?" They said, "We'll just dump them."

We left Marseille. I don't remember the name of the boat. We came to Camp Patrick Henry in Virginia. J. D. Hurst was still with us and I can't remember if Berryman was still with us or not, but Kenny and I were together. We stayed there for a few days and then they shipped us to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, and that's where we split up, everybody except Kenny and me. The rest of them went to different places, Camp Atterbury, Michigan or somewhere in Indiana.

We stayed overnight and the next morning they gave us, I think a five-day furlough, something like that, maybe a seven-day furlough, probably a seven-day furlough. We got a pass and we went in there and they didn't check anything. They kept threatening us and told us not to bring any weapons or anything home because they'd check. I did bring home a little pistol, but I could have brought anything home. But anyway, we traveled as light as we could. So, we took off and started thumbing, Kenny and I. We did well. We got clear up through Pittsburgh, clear through to Steubenville, Ohio. At Steubenville I called home. Before I went in the Army, I worked in Steubenville in the summer of 1941 so I knew Steubenville. Well, we got there and couldn't get a ride. It got dark and there wasn't as much traffic on the road. We were up there on the hill towards Wintersville thumbing. We walked back down the hill. The town was familiar to me, so we went to the bus station. In the meantime, I went to, I think, a drugstore and bought a stuffed toy for Cashie. Then we went to the bus station and took a bus down to Wheeling. It was the bus from Wheeling to Columbus. Well, in Wheeling the Pittsburgh bus, which was going to Columbus and would go through Cambridge, broke down. We had to wait there and finally we got to Cambridge at 4 o'clock in the morning. I'm not sure of the date but it might have been September 30, 1945. I'm not sure of dates but I know I was at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia on September 25, 1945, my birthday.

Photo, September 1945 at Camp Patrick Henry VA – Herret and me

So anyway, I woke up Ruth and Cashie. I was home. We were home about three days when we got a telegram saying we had to report back for discharge. That time I drove. We had a '39 Mercury. John Little from Cambridge found out that I was

going back some way. Well, my sister, Mary Jo, knew the Little family. Anyway, John went back with Kenny and me. So, we got discharged. We got everything and got in the car. John was stealing everything, blankets and such, and putting everything in the trunk of my car. Coming off of the post, I hadn't been driving that much, and the MPs stopped me for speeding. I thought, "Oh, boy, they're going to open that trunk." I said, "I just got home, and I haven't been driving." He laughed and just told me to go on. So, we headed back to Cambridge and the war was over for us. Amen. That was October 4, 1945.

Here is some information about our Regiment's casualties. The first 20 days in combat our Regiment, 329th Regiment, had 365 killed, 2,198 wounded. Now that's wounded and, in the hospital, not minor wounds. In the total war our regiment had 982 killed and 4,169 wounded.

Dick Greer, Kenny, and I never had any problem talking about the war. We never showed any emotions no matter what we did. We did what we had to do and there was never any change in our attitudes. In fact, in Grevenmacher, Luxemburg they sent word down to me the day before, that we're going to have a mock attack in the morning across the river. They were going to fire on the Germans to make them think we were going to attack them there. The next morning before daylight was when it would take place. I'd already, the previous afternoon, before dark, picked out a place upstairs in a house where I was going to fire on the target across the river. Just as soon as I quit firing, I would have to grab I my gun and get out of there before they started shelling with artillery. So, we went over there, and I just had one gun. I went with the Squadron. I kept watching my watch. I sent everybody to the basement so if we got shelled, no sense in everybody getting hit. So, I kept watching my watch and Dick Greer was just standing there in the doorway nonchalantly, leaning up against the doorway. I kept telling him, "Dick, it's getting time. You better go. It's getting time." A couple of minutes later I said, "Dick, you'd better go." He said, "I'm not going to leave you up here by yourself." And he wouldn't go. But anyway, in the end, I'd say Kenny and I were the only ones left that made it all the way from Omaha Beach to across the Elbe River. But after we got home, Kenny and I always talked about the war. Anytime we got together we talked about this foxhole or that foxhole or where we attacked where. Kenny never understood why people would say they don't want to talk about it. I'm sure he was like I was. I never had a nightmare, nothing. After I got home, I never dreamed about the war. But Kenny, now these are Kenny's words, Kenny said, "Well, maybe they couldn't talk about it because they didn't have anything to talk about." I didn't say that Kenny did. Some people are different, I suppose, but always when we got together, we talked about it. So today you remember things clear in your mind. In your mind you can see back there 61 years ago or 60 years ago that day. Little details you always take with you, but they never disturb you. That's the way it was.

Back in Normandy, about the probably 20, 21st of July 1944 in the hedgerows, I had one machine gun sitting facing the enemy, to the right of the other one. I was staying with the youngest Sergeant, Sergeant Stauffer. I went back to check with Sergeant Greer. The hedgerows weren't all the same. They were staggered. I had

to walk over, oh probably a hundred yards to my left to face the Germans and back about a hundred yards to the next hedgerow, through the gate, going to another field, and then back and to my left to Sergeant Greer's Squad. The foxhole was big enough that both of us could get down in it. I got down in there with him and talked about what was going on. As I got up out of the foxhole, I felt a concussion, a blast. It just felt like somebody hit me on the head with a ball bat, hit my helmet. It gave me a headache and I was dazed so I sat back down in the foxhole. Dick Greer, who was from Cambridge, asked me, "You get hit?" I said, "No, it's just a concussion, pressure from a blast." We're just sitting there, talking and pretty soon he said, "Look at your helmet." I took it off, and here there was a crease down the back of my helmet. The helmets had a rim around them, about a quarter of an inch around the edge, and it was pushed away from the helmet about a half an inch. Shrapnel had straightened out the flange of the back of my helmet, but it didn't hit me. I kept that helmet for a long time until I went into the hospital in December 1944. It was my lucky helmet.

These are just a couple of added items that Dad didn't put on his recording. In 1937, Dad believes it was, he and Uncle Bill (his brother) went to the State Fair in Columbus, Ohio. Uncle Bill drove. While they were there, they met some girls. Alice, from Cincinnati, was one of them and she and Dad became pen pals. They were nothing other than just pen pals, but they did write back and forth to each other for a little awhile. When Dad was in the hospital in December of '44, he came across a man when he was out in a canteen area of the hospital. I introduced himself as Cash Misel and the guy said, "You're from Cambridge, Ohio. You used to write to Alice." Dad didn't remember her last name, but this guy did. Alice was a friend of his. So, Dad found it interesting that he went all the way to Europe and while in the hospital ran into somebody who knew Alice, whom he had written to at one time.

This is another little incident that, I guess, it is about the war, because it's about the watch that Mom sent Dad. He brought it back from the war. When he and Mom lived on Madison Avenue, one day they were in the kitchen while acting a fool, Mom hit Dad with a skillet on his arm and it broke the watch. I think he still has the watch, but it doesn't run. He got it the day before he was hit. It's ironic that it survived the war but not Mom!

HERE ARE LISTINGS OF THE MEN IN MY SECTIONS:

July 1944

1st Section – Section Leader, S/Sergeant Misel

1st Squad Leader – Sergeant Stauffer	2nd Squad Leader – Sergeant Greer
1st Gunner – Sinclair	1st Gunner – Holcomb
2nd Gunner – Jackson	2nd Gunner – Jones
Ammo Bearer – Bigness	Ammo Bearer – Long
Ammo Bearer – Kraft	Ammo Bearer – Nevius
Ammo Bearer – Kaulp	Ammo Bearer – Colley

February 1945

2nd Section – Section Leader, S/Sergeant Misel

3rd Squad Leader – Sergeant Rittger	4th Squad Leader – Sergeant Nevius
1st Gunner – Austin	1st Gunner – Bigness
2nd Gunner – Pula	2nd Gunner – Ponte
Ammo Bearer – Wynn	Ammo Bearer – Wooten
Ammo Bearer – Fink	Ammo Bearer – Burdiss
Ammo Bearer – Fredrick	Ammo Bearer – Carter
Ammo Bearer – Edwards	
Driver – Broughton	Driver – Wayt

April 1945

3rd Squad Leader – Sergeant Rittger	4th Squad Ldr – Sergeant Christinsen
Finch	Bigness
Austin	Ponte
Pula	Wooten
Fink	Burdiss
Faber	Henricksen
Driver – Broughton	Driver – Wayt

June 1945

3rd Squad Leader – Sergeant Bigness	4th Squad Ldr – Sergeant Christinsen
Finch	Faught
Austin	Pula
Fabec	Wooten
Fink	Hendricksen
	Burdiss
Driver – Broughton	Driver – Wayt

Photo, Pula (NJ)

Photo, Henricksen (IL)

Photo, Wayt (WV)

Photo, Burdiss (WV)

Photo, Fink

Photo, Fraizer (Akron, OH)

HEADQUARTERS 83d INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 83, U. S. Army

10 May 1945.

SUBJECT: V-E Day.

TO: All Ranks, 83d Infantry Division.

1. At 1500, 8 May 1945, V-E day was declared by President Truman and all hostilities officially ceased in this theater. The war against Germany had ended in complete victory for the United States and its Allies.

2. The accomplishments of this Division in combat against the Germans have been outstanding. The hard fighting done by the Division in Normandy against Germany's best troops helped to prepare the way for the breakthrough at St. Lo. In Brittany, we secured a port for the Allies by the capture of St. Malo and Dinard, and a battalion combat team assisted in the reduction of Brest. By successfully blocking along the Loire River on a frontage of some 300 miles, we protected the south flank of the armies advancing eastward and freed other combat units for use in that drive. In Luxembourg, we drove the enemy east of the Sauer and Moselle Rivers in a wide zone. In our first battle in Germany, we secured a decisive victory by breaking out of the Hurtgen Forest and driving the enemy east of the Roer River. Immediately following this, and without time for rest, the Division was moved to the Ardennes where it attacked to the south on the shoulder of the German penetration ("Bulge"). In extremely severe weather conditions and again against the best German troops, we accomplished our mission by securing a breakthrough that was exploited by an armored division. After a period of rest and training in Belgium and Holland, the Division was again at peak efficiency as was proved by its operations east of the Rhine. In these, the Division showed that, in addition to its excellence in hard fighting and close combat, it had speed and audacity in a breakthrough. At the end of the last drive, we secured the only American bridgehead over the Elbe River and held it against repeated counterattacks.

3. These are accomplishments of which you may well be proud. They were achieved by your stamina, your courage, your skill, and your devotion to duty.

4. We are now engaged in occupational duties. On these you should put forth your best efforts, for our success or failure as an Occupational Army will have a direct bearing on the years to come.

5. We must be watchful that we do not harm in any way the fine name the Division has earned in combat. So, show by your dress, your bearing, and your conduct that you are superior soldiers in a superior Division, for that is what you have already proven yourselves to be.

6. The United States is still engaged in a bitter war against the Japanese. We may be called on to play our part in that war. For this reason, the Division must maintain its combat efficiency. So, when the time comes for training, put the same spirit and enthusiasm into it that you have put into your training in the past. It has proven well worthwhile as you know.

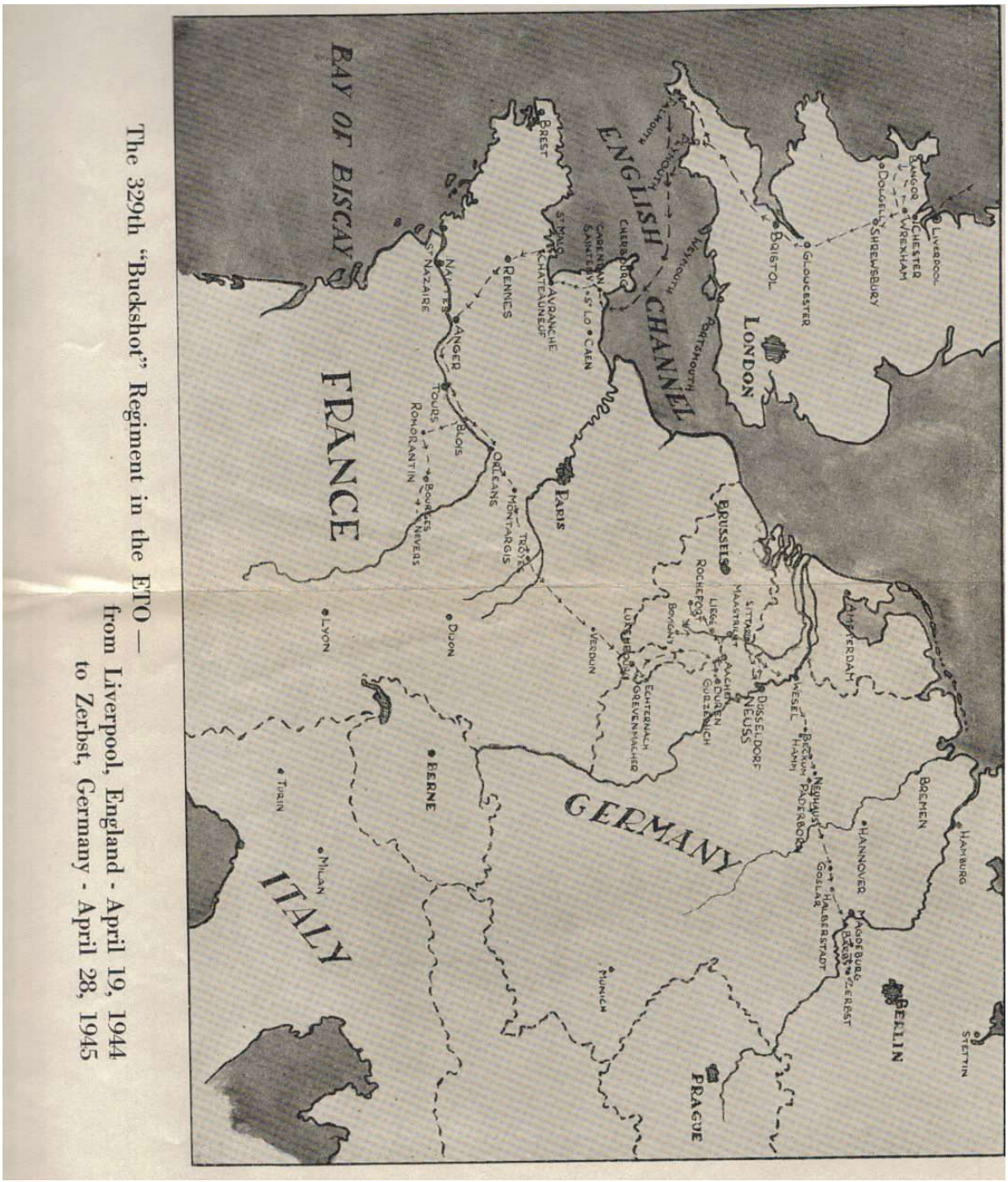
7. The question that is uppermost in all of your minds is: "What happens now? Will I be discharged; will I be sent to the Pacific; will I remain here in the Army of Occupation; or will I be placed on duty in the United States?" I do not know the answers to these questions. Any one of the things that I have listed is a possibility. I will give you the best advice I can. That is, select the alternative that seems least desirable and then prepare your mind for that eventuality. If you will do this, it will prevent many cruel disappointments, and if what you consider to be the worst does not come to pass, then it will be so much to the good.

8. You may be assured that to the very best of our abilities, the policies on discharge and return of individuals to the United States will be carried out with the maximum speed and fairness.

9. Whatever happens to you individually, I wish you the best of luck, and want to express to each of you my appreciation for what you have done. It has been in the finest tradition of our people.

Robt C Macon

ROBT. C. MACON
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding.



The 329th "Buckshot" Regiment in the ETO —
from Liverpool, England - April 19, 1944
to Zerbst, Germany - April 28, 1945